



1986

## The Theological Anthropology Developed in Origen's Interpretations of Genesis 1:26-30 and Genesis 2:4-9

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THE THEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY DEVELOPED  
IN ORIGEN'S INTERPRETATIONS OF  
GENESIS 1:26-30 AND GENESIS 2:4-9

by  
Margaret M. Watzek

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts

July

1986

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis could never have been attempted, much less completed, without the help of many people. I would especially like to thank Fr. Thomas H. Tobin, S.J., the director of this thesis, for his encouragement, patience and invaluable advice.

I would also like to thank the members of my thesis committee, Dr. Jon Nilson and Dr. John L. White. I am very grateful for their encouragement and assistance throughout all of my graduate studies, as well as for their patience and attention with this thesis.

I am also indebted to Margie Ryman for typing this thesis, and tolerating my spelling errors and numerous additions to and subtractions from the text with humor and patience.

Finally, I must thank my family and friends, whose encouragement and support enabled me to complete this thesis. My mother, Mrs. Mary Lou Watzek, deserves special mention. Her tireless support and persistent encouragement pushed this thesis to its conclusion.

## VITA

The author, Margaret M. Watzek, is the daughter of John W. Watzek and Mary Lou (Shipman) Watzek. She was born July 24, 1959, in Columbus, Ohio.

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## INTRODUCTION

Theologians reflect on the relationship between God and man. Because of the Christian conception of God, Christian theology is dependent on, and requires some theory about, God's self-revelation. Different Christian theologians in different eras have explored different aspects of man's existence as means through which God reveals himself. Such sources of knowledge include Scripture, history, reason, and experience. Different theologians also employ different techniques in reflecting on revelation. In order to understand a specific theologian, we must know what he uses as his source of revealed information, and understand how he uses that source. Within this context, we will be able to understand his theological positions in their fullest sense. We will be able to tell where these positions come from, what they mean in themselves, and what implications they have.

When the Fathers of the early Christian Church did theology, they used Scripture as their primary source for God's revelation. Biblical interpretation was the body and bones of their theology. The techniques which they used to interpret Scripture incorporated various philosophical positions, which therefore influenced their theological understanding; but the primary focus of their theological reflection was the text of Scripture.

Origen has been identified as the first Christian "theologian," with the implication that he is the first to have moved beyond Biblical interpretation to speculative theology. But in his own writings, Origen makes no distinction between these two functions. Origen reflects theologically by interpreting Scripture. The correct interpretation of Scripture produces sound theological speculation.

Origen's particular exegetical technique, allegory, allows him to engage in extensive speculation. Allegory assumes that the text means more than the words themselves are able to directly communicate. But as Origen develops his allegorical method, we see that he is not free to import whatever meaning he desires into the text. For Origen, allegory is not primarily a means of deriving relevant information from a recalcitrant text. If this were the case, Origen's criteria for relevancy would be the guiding principles of his interpretation. Rather, Origen believes allegory is the way to allow Scripture to interpret itself. The text of Scripture is not obscure and recalcitrant; it is mysteriously relevatory. Scripture is the specific means which God has chosen to reveal himself to man. By allowing Scripture to reveal its mysteries--and for Origen this means by pursuing allegorical interpretations--the theologian is able to reflect on God's self-revelation.

Since Origen does theology through scriptural interpretation, an examination of a specific theological doctrine

depends on an understanding of Origen's interpretation of the texts in which he finds this doctrine. Since the allegorical technique presupposes a vast interconnection of scriptural texts, and interprets these texts in the light of each other, developing such an understanding of Origen's interpretations is a formidable task. The best approach for studying Origen's theology is a close examination of his interpretations of specific texts as he uses these texts to develop a specific theological position.

This thesis is an examination of Origen's interpretations of Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9--the two biblical accounts of the creation of man--in order to better understand Origen's theological anthropology, and the soteriological element of Origen's incarnational theology. Origen uses these texts to develop his description of the human condition.

When early Christian writers discuss the human condition, the subject of the human problem is necessarily included. For the early Church, man's existence is obviously flawed, especially in regards to man's relationship with God. Any discussion of the human condition involves a discussion of what is wrong with the human condition. When early Christian theologians discuss theological anthropology, they are engaged in diagnosing the problem which is inherent in man's existence, due to man's culpable action.

Such a diagnosis sets the stage for presenting a



cure. Origen and other early Christian writers analyze the problem inherent in man's current existence from a perspective which presupposes the Christian solution to this problem: the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Therefore, any discussion of Origen's theological anthropology will lead to an examination of Origen's soteriology.

When Origen uses his interpretations of Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9 to develop his theological anthropology, he draws on a tradition of interpretation which has been heavily influenced by Philo of Alexandria. Philo's interpretations of these verses examine the role of the Logos in the creation of man, and in the relationship between God and man. Therefore, we might expect that Origen's Logos theology has been heavily influenced by Philo's Logos theology.

Origen's interpretations of Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9 are crucial to his theological anthropology. But Origen draws on Philo's interpretations of these passages in his own work. Philo writes from a non-Christian perspective, and therefore his interpretations of Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9 and his theological anthropology do not correspond to a Christian belief in the saving activity of Christ's life, death and resurrection. Since Origen uses Philo's interpretations of Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9 to develop his own theological anthropology, we might expect Origen's theological anthropology to lack an intrinsic correspondence to Christian soteriology. We might expect Origen's theo-

logical anthropology to presuppose a "Philonic" soteriology. Origen may describe the problem inherent in man's current existence in such a way that Philo's marriage of Judaism and Middle Platonism is the implied solution.

By examining Origen's interpretations of Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9 and the theological anthropology which he develops through these interpretations we discover that this is not the case. Origen's use of Philonic interpretations in his own work does not lead him to neglect the implications of Christian soteriology. On the contrary, Origen adapts Philo's interpretations of Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9 to emphasize the soteriological aspect of the Incarnation of the Logos--even though the concept of the Incarnation is alien to Philo's perspective. Thus, Origen uses non-Christian elements to develop a distinctively Christian theological anthropology: an understanding of the defect in man's existence which requires the Incarnation of the Logos as Jesus Christ as its resolution.

This thesis proposes to establish the contention that Origen's theological anthropology, as he develops it through his interpretations of Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9, involves specific reference to the Incarnation as a necessary component in the saving work of the Logos. In order to establish this contention, Origen's interpretations of Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9 must be carefully examined. Such an examination requires a thorough understanding of Origen's

exegetical method and general treatment of Scripture. The first chapter of this thesis will attempt to provide such an understanding of Origen's use of the allegorical method.

The second chapter will use this understanding of Origen's exegetical technique to examine his interpretations of Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9. Origen tends to neglect Gen 2:4-9 in favor of Gen 1:26-30; therefore, Origen's first Homily on Genesis, the most comprehensive interpretation of Gen 1:26-30 in his surviving works, will be the foundation for this examination. The concepts and issues which Origen derives from Gen 1:26-30 in this homily will be the foci for our examination of all other interpretations of Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9 which occur in Origen's writings.

Since Origen does not develop these interpretations in a vacuum, we must explore the various influences on, and sources of, Origen's work if we are to adequately understand this work. Chapter Three will consist of an exploration of the two most probable influences on Origen's interpretations of Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9: Clement of Alexandria and Philo of Alexandria. By comparing the interpretations of the authors with Origen's, we will be able to highlight specific characteristics of Origen's interpretations and discover the implications and assumptions of these interpretations. At the end of these three chapters, we should have a thorough understanding of the content and implications of Origen's interpretations of Gen 1:26-30 and Gen

2:4-9.

The last chapter of this thesis will correlate the theological anthropology which Origen develops in these interpretations with the soteriological "solutions" which this anthropology presupposes. Our task is simplified since Origen sometimes makes this correlation himself. Origen sometimes uses his interpretations of Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9 to explicitly present aspects of his understanding of the saving work of Christ. In other cases, Origen's soteriology is only implicitly present through his theological anthropology. By examining the explicit and implicit soteriological aspects of Origen's interpretations of Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9, we will be able to see how Origen develops an understanding of the human problem which requires the Incarnation of the Logos as its solution.

## CHAPTER I

### ORIGEN'S EXEGETICAL METHOD

Before examining the specific interpretation which Origen gives to the creation of man stories in Genesis, we must examine his general understanding of the character of Scripture and its interpretation. This examination will include an analysis of what Origen thinks Scripture is, what purpose Scripture has and how it achieves this purpose. Secondly, Origen's conception of the three levels of meaning within Scripture will be explored, as a principle which governs his exegetical method. Finally, since the methods of interpretation which Origen uses are based upon this understanding of Scripture, an examination of these techniques will follow this analysis.

#### I. The Nature and Purpose of Scripture

When Origen deals with Scripture, he is dealing for the most part with the Bible used by modern believers: the books which Origen considered canonical are roughly the books included in the modern Catholic canon.<sup>1</sup> Origen considers the Septuagint the authoritative text for the Old Testament, even where it differs from the Hebrew text, since he maintains the tradition of the divine inspiration of this translation.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, Origen is sensitive

to the possibility that some Septuagint texts have been corrupted in their transmission, and therefore uses the Hebrew text and other Greek translations to establish the proper version of the Septuagint text.<sup>3</sup> While Origen considers the Septuagint to be the divinely inspired Scripture of the Christian faith, he is sensitive to the textual problems arising from the transmission of this text.

In considering Scripture as divinely inspired, Origen maintains that Scripture carries God's power and authority. The content of Scripture is essentially divine truth, truth revealed by God and therefore supremely trustworthy. In the final analysis, Origen considers Scripture to be the only consistently reliable source of information regarding God's teaching available to mankind.<sup>4</sup>

Scripture must be a reliable source of God's teaching, since Scripture's function is to reveal the truth about God. By communicating these truths, Scripture leads man to God. Thus, Scripture contains all of the doctrines of Christian faith, and all of the truths about God which human language is capable of conveying. The frailty of human language is a limitation. Sometimes the truths are communicated in fragmentary or shadowy fashion, but such is the "sacramental mystery" of this life as a whole. What man can apprehend in his present state is only a "copy" of the perfect comprehension which is possible to the purified, perfect soul. But the "copy" which we are able to compre-

hend can still lead us to the higher truths by training our "spiritual intelligence."<sup>5</sup> Thus, Scripture acts as a figure of the eternal truth, and therefore as a path to the eternal truth.<sup>6</sup> The possession of perfect truth is itself union with God, so Scripture is primarily God's instrument for leading mankind to this union. Since this truth is essentially "spiritual," Scripture is intended to convey to humanity information about, and the requirements of, the spiritual life.<sup>7</sup> Although Scripture, the pathway to perfection, may be accepted and employed by a community of believers, the emphasis of this type of understanding of Scripture, God, and perfection tends to be on the efforts of the individual soul. While Origen is committed to the Church, his fundamental bias is towards exploring the character and duties of the individual's spiritual life, and his interpretation of Scripture reflects this bias.<sup>8</sup>

But while Origen considers the content of Scripture to be eminently trustworthy, he qualifies the confidence with which he approaches Scripture with three codicils. First, Origen considers Scripture to be a unified, inspired text which God has given to his Church to lead its members to unity with him. Thus the contents of Scripture must be understood in light of the whole of Scripture, and the purpose for which Scripture has been given. This principle of totality leads Origen to assert that individual passages of Scripture must be interpreted in a manner consistent with

the rest of Scripture, and with the purpose of Scripture, in order to be trustworthy. Therefore, passages of Scripture which seem to assert something which is inconsistent with the rest of Scripture, or which do not contribute to leading mankind towards unity with God, such passages must be understood in a non-literal fashion if their divinely inspired content is to be received.<sup>9</sup>

The principle that Scripture must be treated as a coherent whole governs Origen's understanding of the relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Some modern authors have suggested that Origen understands the New Testament as superceding the Old, in the sense that the New Testament has made the Old Testament obsolete.<sup>10</sup> Origen's use of New Testament interpretations of the older scriptures may have contributed to this theory. The Old Testament must be understood in the light of the New Testament, whose message moves beyond the preliminary stages which the Old Testament scriptures provided. But Origen's attitude toward the Old Testament is more positive: the Old Testament scriptures form a unity with the New Testament. The Old Testament must be interpreted in the light of the New Testament because the New Testament reveals the true meaning of the Old, which is essentially the Christian Gospel. Thus, rather than superceding it, the New Testament allows the Old Testament to come into its own; the true meaning of the Old Testament is, and was intended to be,



Christian.<sup>11</sup> The interpretation of any passage of Scripture must be consistent with the correct, i.e., Christian interpretation of the rest of Scripture. Such a proper interpretation of an Old Testament passage may indicate the correct interpretation of a passage from the New Testament. Therefore, the trustworthy character of Scripture depends upon the correct interpretation of Scripture, which can only be determined when Scripture is treated as a "seamless garment."

The second qualification which Origen makes to the trustworthiness of Scripture is that Scripture must be interpreted properly in order to be trusted. This correct interpretation is itself dependent upon divine inspiration. The true meaning of Scripture, the divinely inspired and trustworthy content of Scripture, is only available to those who have been inspired by the grace of God. This inspiration belongs to all Christians due to the grace which they received at baptism, so all Christians have some idea of the true meaning of Scripture.<sup>12</sup> But the inspiration to more deeply comprehend the meaning of Scripture is a special charism, theoretically available to all Christians, but actually bestowed only upon those who are capable of understanding (and thus profiting from) the deeper meaning of Scripture.<sup>13</sup> This deeper meaning is the content which God primarily intends the Scripture to convey, and so is also the meaning intended by the inspired author of the text.

While Origen asserts that the inspired character of Scripture is thus directly related to the intended meaning of the author, he also maintains that this meaning is not available to the reader without divine inspiration leading to the correct, spiritual understanding of the text.<sup>14</sup>

The third qualification which Origen makes regarding the trustworthiness of Scripture is that, while Scripture is, as a whole, the only reliable source of God's teaching generally available to humanity, it is nevertheless incomplete; human language is incapable of expressing all of the mysteries of God. Thus, the truth communicated by Scripture is limited by the medium through which it is communicated. Origen implies that some human individuals (for example, the author of John's gospel or Paul) have a direct relationship to these inexpressible mysteries, and are able to obtain more complete knowledge of God than could be communicated in writing.<sup>15</sup> This is clearly not possible for the average believer. Origen seems to have included this codicil regarding the trustworthiness of Scripture to avoid "idolatry" in regard to Scripture, rather than to recommend some alternative source for knowledge of God. Origen wants to stress the existence of ultimate truth, the "eternal gospel" to which Scripture points, but which it cannot entirely communicate, rather than to suggest this eternal gospel as a replacement for Scripture.<sup>16</sup>

This quasi-independence of divine truth from the

scriptural text is another reason why the exegete is dependent upon divine assistance to interpret the text. The frailty of human language, which prevents Scripture from containing and revealing the complete, eternal truth of God also afflicts the other forms of human knowledge. Therefore, such knowledge is of limited usefulness in interpreting Scripture. Although he employs "secular" techniques of textual and literary criticism as a preliminary phase of his exegesis, often using these techniques to establish the text's literal/historical meaning, Origen primarily relies upon Scripture itself to interpret Scripture. Since Scripture must be accepted as a unified whole, difficult passages within Scripture must be understood in the light of the rest of Scripture.<sup>17</sup>

The illumination that Scripture imparts to difficult passages may take several forms. A New Testament author may include, and thus interpret, an Old Testament passage within his inspired text. When this occurs, the New Testament author's interpretation is inspired and authoritative.<sup>18</sup>

In some instances, Scripture itself provides exegetical instructions. Origen points to the letters of Paul as providing instructions for correctly interpreting the Law, and to Proverbs as establishing the "three-fold sense of Scripture" principle which is so prominent in Origen's writings.<sup>19</sup>

## II. Scripture's Three Levels of Meaning

In this examination of Origen's understanding of the nature of Scripture, mention has been made of his principle of the three levels of meaning which Scripture contains. This theory is prominent in Origen's exegetical writings, and an examination of this theory is necessary to understanding how Origen perceives Scripture, and how he interprets it. Origen describes this theory clearly in De Principiis IV,2,4:

One must therefore portray the meaning of Scripture in a three-fold way upon one's own soul, so that the simple man may be edified by what we may call the flesh of the scripture, this name being given to the obvious meaning of scripture; while the man who has made some progress may be edified by its soul, as it were; and the man who is perfect ... may be edified by the spiritual law, which has 'a shadow of the good things to come.' For just as a man consists of body, soul and spirit, so in the same way does scripture, which has been prepared by God to be given for man's salvation.<sup>20</sup>

This passage has several ambiguities. The first is the way in which Origen intends this theory to be applied in exegesis. The most common understanding among scholars is that Origen maintains that the three levels of meaning in Scripture are all valid, but useful for different types of men. The "obvious meaning" of Scripture is useful and edifying for simple believers, who are incapable of comprehending the deeper meaning, the "mysteries" of Scripture. Scripture's level of meaning which corresponds to the soul is edifying for those who have advanced from simple belief, but who have not yet achieved a "spiritual capacity" as

such. The highest or deepest level of meaning is the pathway of perfection proper--the level at which the believer is able to perceive the spiritual truths.<sup>21</sup>

The passage cited above certainly supports this understanding, but with some ambiguity. Origen advises that we apply this threefold meaning "to our own soul," and implies that the reason why Scripture has been endowed with this tri-level structure of meaning is to allow Scripture to correspond to the three parts of the human individual--not for the edification of three types of men. Nevertheless, Origen himself does apply this distinction of the three levels of meaning in Scripture for the benefit of three types of men. This ambiguity might be resolved, to some extent, by positing that the three types of men to whom Origen refers the specific levels of Scripture are divided into groups on the basis of which parts of the human individual predominate in their characters. For example, if the concerns of the flesh occupy a given individual, then the "fleshly" meaning of Scripture would be the level most appropriate to such an individual's present condition, and Origen maintains that even this level of Scripture is able to lead the individual towards the spiritual level.<sup>22</sup>

This adjustment in the interpretation of Origen implies that all three levels of meaning are valuable for all human individuals, but that one or another level is predominantly useful. For the advanced Christian, the spir-

itual level would be of primary benefit, although even the obvious meaning of a given text would have some value. Thus, an exegesis of each level of meaning in Scripture would be appropriate in public discourse, regardless of the supposed "spirituality" of the audience. Origen includes an interpretation of all three levels of Scripture's meaning in both his homilies (which might be expected to have a broader, more general audience in mind) and in his commentaries (which might be expected to be addressed to the more advanced). Since Origen includes literal interpretations of Scripture in his more spiritual writings, and spiritual interpretations of Scripture in his more popular writings, he clearly believes that all the levels of meaning within Scripture are valuable for everyone. The fact that the obvious meaning almost invariably receives less attention, and Origen consistently urges his audience to advance beyond this level, need not be seen as contrary evidence. Origen is concerned with the spiritual progress of his audience, which would require a growing ability to perceive and appreciate the deeper meanings of Scripture.<sup>23</sup>

But even with this adjustment, the tri-level structure of the meaning of Scripture which Origen presents in De Principiis IV,2,4 contains a second ambiguity in regard to the relationship of these different levels to each other, and the presence of each level of meaning in every passage of Scripture. Modern scholars have frequently pointed to

the ambiguity of the level of meaning corresponding to the soul. This level seems to refer to the moral meaning of a scriptural passage, which would primarily apply to the improvement of the individual believer.<sup>24</sup> But J.N.D. Kelly points out that in practice, Origen tends to employ an alternate middle level of meaning in Scripture: the typological meaning, which would apply to the improvement of the Church as a whole.<sup>25</sup>

But, as several scholars have pointed out, Origen does not consistently follow this tri-level theory in his own exegetical writings. Often, he simply distinguishes between the letter, or the obvious meaning, of Scripture (the body) and the higher meaning of Scripture (the spirit).<sup>26</sup> Sometimes, Origen explicitly includes the moral level as one aspect of the spiritual level; sometimes the moral level is omitted altogether.<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, the moral meaning may be the only "higher," spiritual meaning which a passage contains. In one of his homilies, Origen argues that the moral meaning of Scripture sometimes has the highest meaning available to mankind, and no effort should be made to go beyond it.<sup>28</sup> Yet in De Principiis, Origen declares that while not all of Scripture has meaning on the lowest level, all Scripture does have meaning on the highest level. So in some instances, the moral meaning is the spiritual meaning of a text. The result of this confusion is that while the tri-level theory is an essential

aspect of Origen's over-all understanding of Scripture, his actual exegesis seems to depend upon a bi-level distinction between the "bodily," or obvious, meaning of Scripture and the "spiritual" meaning of Scripture, which may include either a moral meaning, or an approximation of eternal/spiritual meaning, or both.

Origen's understanding of Scripture (and the human person, and reality as a whole) is fundamentally dualistic. Origen adopts the Platonic distinction between the finite, imperfect, material and sensible world, and the infinite and perfect existence of ideas. The three levels which Origen postulates within Scripture are an attempt to distinguish between the partial experience of the ideal realm which man currently possesses, and the more complete and perfect experience of this realm which man once possessed, and is destined to regain. The distinction between the soul and the spirit is an attempt to maintain a spiritual element within every individual, while acknowledging that this spiritual element is not presently perfect.

### III. Origen's Exegesis: The Allegorical Method

The rest of this chapter will examine how the "spiritual" and "bodily" levels are related in Origen's exegesis, and how one moves from one level to the other.

The language employed by Origen to distinguish between the two levels of meaning in Scripture--the spiritual



meaning and the bodily meaning--indicates something about the relationship between the two. Just as an individual's soul is "clothed" by the individual's body, the spiritual meaning of Scripture is clothed by the body of the text--and the bodily meaning of the text.<sup>29</sup> One obvious result of this "clothing" is that the spiritual meaning is not immediately apparent in the text, any more than a human soul is visible in the human body. In this sense, at least, Origen speaks of the text of Scripture as "veiling" or concealing the spiritual sense.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, Origen considers the spiritual sense to be hidden within the bodily meaning of the text of Scripture just as the human soul is hidden within the body.

The method which Origen employs to ascertain and interpret the hidden spiritual meaning within Scripture is allegory. If the spiritual meaning is hidden within the bodily meaning of Scripture, then the spiritual meaning must differ from the bodily meaning. Allegory refers both to the text which contains a hidden spiritual meaning, and to the technique which enables the exegete to move from the bodily meaning to the spiritual meaning.<sup>31</sup>

If the spiritual meaning is completely unrelated to the bodily meaning, such an interpretation would be completely arbitrary. But Origen understands the two levels to be related: the body of Scripture is a "copy" or "shadow" of the spiritual meaning contained within it.<sup>32</sup> In some

sense, the bodily meaning of a scriptural text symbolizes its spiritual meaning. Allegory is the method of interpretation which reveals this hidden meaning of the symbols in the text.<sup>33</sup>

But Scripture only hides the spiritual meaning of a passage so that the meaning might be communicated more effectively and appropriately. Origen asserts that an allegory is a powerful means of conveying truth. "Clothing" the deeper meaning of Scripture in another, more obvious meaning incites the curiosity of the learned and compels the respect of the unlearned.<sup>34</sup> The manner in which Origen extracts the spiritual meaning from an allegorical text directly corresponds to the manner in which he understands the text to contain and communicate the spiritual meaning. A close examination of Origen's exegetical techniques reveals the character of the relationship between the text and its underlying, spiritual meaning.

Thus far, allegorical interpretation has been taken to refer to any kind of non-literal interpretation of the text. In the history of Christian exegesis, non-literal interpretations of the Bible have generally been one of two kinds: allegorical or typological. The distinction between these two forms of non-literal interpretation is not always clear in scholarly research, but R.P.C. Hanson's definitions of these terms are quite helpful. Typology is the interpreting of an event described in one passage of Scripture

as the fulfillment of a similar situation found in another scriptural passage. Allegory is interpreting a figure in a text (a person or event) as actually meaning something else.<sup>35</sup>

Typology interprets a text by noting and explaining the similarities between the figure in one text, and another figure in another text. Thus, the serpent which Moses fashioned and set upon a staff is a type of Christ: both the serpent and Christ were "lifted up" as God's instrument for salvation. The elaboration of the similarities between Christ and the serpent is the task of typological interpretation. The characteristics of one are used to explain the implied characteristics of the other. Thus, typological interpretation examines two similar texts in light of each other.

Allegorical interpretation, on the other hand, attempts to move between two levels of meaning within a single text. Allegory may refer to other scriptural texts in order to establish the correspondence between the two levels of meaning by identifying a common symbolism used throughout Scripture. But the texts are not taken as referring to each other, as in typological interpretation. In allegory, the correspondence between the figure found in the bodily meaning and the spiritual meaning of the text often relies upon the consistent use of a specific symbol in Scripture.

When Origen explains his allegorical method, he

uses the example of Scripture's habitual use of Israel and Jerusalem as symbols of a specific kind of spiritual existence. Origen establishes that Scripture consistently uses Israel and Jerusalem to refer to a heavenly existence by adducing various passages where this symbolism is explicit (e.g., Gal. 4:26). He then applies this symbolism to various texts in which Jerusalem and/or Israel appear, and even to texts which refer to other nations and cities, where such references either are not or cannot be literally true.<sup>36</sup>

In this description of his allegorical method, Origen does not make a detailed comparison of two or more texts which contain references to Jerusalem. Nor does he elaborately describe the characteristics of the earthly Jerusalem which make it an appropriate symbol for a heavenly existence. The primary thrust of his argument is that this symbolism is used in various texts, and he shows how this symbolism leads to a proper spiritual interpretation of these texts. The intrinsic similarity between the symbol (e.g., Jerusalem) and what is symbolized (e.g., heavenly existence), is not explored in any detail, and often appears to be a very tenuous similarity.

In Origen's allegorical method, such intrinsic similarity between the bodily meaning and the spiritual meaning must be tenuous. The spiritual meaning of Scripture is intended to communicate divine, eternal truths, and such truths could not possess the same similarity with the fig-

ures which represent them that two similar earthly figures might possess. This very fact is one reason why Origen tends to devalue typology. Although he uses typological interpretations in his exegesis, Origen perceives this technique as producing information about non-spiritual matters, and therefore typology is not an adequate technique for ascertaining the spiritual meaning of Scripture.<sup>37</sup>

But if some sort of intrinsic similarity between the spiritual meaning and the bodily meaning of the text which "clothes" it is ruled out by the nature of the spiritual meaning, is there any correspondence between the text and the allegorical interpretation, outside of the interpreter's imagination? Many scholars deny that any such connection exists.<sup>38</sup> But Origen calls the bodily sense of Scripture a "shadow" or "copy" of the spiritual sense, so he apparently conceives of some such connection. The manner in which Origen develops his allegorical interpretations also indicates that the relationship between the text and the allegory interpreting it are not solely dependent upon his own fancy.

In his commentaries, Origen's first exegetical move is to establish the text and its literal (or "proper") meaning.<sup>39</sup> The pains which Origen takes to achieve this purpose involves considerable erudition. Origen employs sophisticated literary analysis, including lexicography, etymology and careful consideration of the context of a given pas-

sage, in his effort to reveal the bodily sense of the text. Origen is acutely aware that even the literal meaning of a given passage is not always obvious.<sup>40</sup> The care and skill which Origen brings to this task justify Trigg's assessment that he is "one of the greatest interpreters of the Bible on the literal level in the early Church."<sup>41</sup>

Origen's assertion that the simple believer can benefit from the bodily meaning of Scripture cannot sufficiently account for the effort which Origen expends in explaining the literal meaning of a text, especially if Origen simply intends to abandon this meaning once it has been ascertained. Undeniably, Origen considers it necessary to move beyond the literal meaning; but the care with which he establishes the literal meaning is evidence that such a move depends upon a careful and complete understanding of the bodily meaning of the text. Origen's subsequent exegesis indicates the nature of this dependence.

Having ascertained the proper literal interpretation, Origen insists that the "exact reader" should

carefully investigate how far the literal meaning is true and how far it is impossible, and to the utmost of his power trace out from the use of similar expressions the meaning scattered everywhere throughout the scriptures of that which when taken literally is impossible.<sup>42</sup>

This passage provides the key to Origen's allegorical method and the way he thinks the text of Scripture corresponds to the spiritual meaning of Scripture. Origen's maxim that "all of Scripture has a spiritual meaning, but not all of

Scripture has a literal meaning" must be understood within the context of this passage.<sup>43</sup> The literal meaning of Scripture is, by and large, accurate and authoritative.<sup>44</sup> But on occasion, the literal meaning of a scriptural passage will be false: either impossible or absurd, or simply inaccurate.<sup>45</sup> These occasions of error within the literal sense of the text are not accidental; they accord with God's over-all purpose for Scripture of leading mankind to divine truth, and are therefore spiritually true. God includes such "stumbling-blocks" within the literal meaning of certain scriptural texts to indicate the existence of the spiritual meaning of Scripture as a whole. Without such statements, the reader would have no reason to look more carefully into the text.<sup>46</sup>

The occasional fallacies within the literal meaning of a specific text act as reminders that all Scripture has a spiritual meaning, and these fallacies also provide clues regarding what that spiritual meaning might be. But these clues are indirect. To correctly interpret the passage in question, Origen advises the exegete to identify the literally false statements within a passage and then to "trace out the use of similar expressions" in the rest of Scripture. The way such expressions are used in other passages of Scripture may shed light upon the spiritual meaning which these expressions are intended to indicate in the text in question.

Many scholars have pointed out Origen's habit of associating key words and concepts of a scriptural text with other occurrences of the same words and concepts elsewhere in Scripture.<sup>47</sup> The fact that Origen's allegories tend to arise in response to passages which Origen finds problematic is also well established.<sup>48</sup> In the passage from De Principiis IV,3,5 quoted above, Origen explicitly links these two exegetical habits. Together they provide a method for ascertaining the spiritual meaning contained within a specific text. The fallacious statement discovered in a text is compared to similar instances of that statement found elsewhere in Scripture. The information obtained from this comparison points to the spiritually true meaning which the literally false statement is meant to convey. With this particular spiritual meaning as the key, the entire passage in which the original "stumbling-block" occurs can then be allegorically interpreted.<sup>49</sup>

The connection between the spiritual meaning of Scripture and the text thus depends upon the passages of the text which are literally untrue, and the occurrence of similar passages in other parts of Scripture which indicate the spiritual meaning of these literally untenable passages. The literal meaning of a text must be correctly ascertained in order to correctly identify the limits of that literal meaning. Where the literal meaning breaks down, the spiritual meaning is able to be perceived through



comparison with similar texts. When the "stumbling-blocks" of a text have been spiritually interpreted in this fashion, the entire passage must be interpreted spiritually. Once he has correctly interpreted the specific symbols found within a problematic text, Origen allegorically interprets the entire passage which contains that text. The interpretation of the "stumbling-block" invokes specific categories of the spiritual meaning of Scripture. Such an invocation brings all of the symbolic meanings and implications concerning spiritual truths in general into the interpretation of the entire passage which contains the stumbling-block. Thus, Origen constructs an integrated allegorical interpretation of an entire passage, based upon the symbolism contained within a literally false expression found in that passage, or carried over from another passage.

#### IV. Conclusion

From this examination of Origen's general understanding of Scripture, we have seen that Origen considers Scripture to be the means by which God leads man to a union with himself. This union is accomplished by man coming to perceive divine truth. Since Scripture is the divinely inspired medium of such truth, Scripture is trustworthy and authoritative.

Nevertheless, Scripture by itself is not absolute. In order for Scripture to lead man to divine truth, it must

be correctly interpreted. The correct interpretation of Scripture requires that Scripture be interpreted as a whole, and each scriptural passage must be understood in the light of the rest of Scripture.

Furthermore, the correct interpretation of Scripture requires the assistance of divine inspiration. In order for Scripture to be correctly understood, the same Spirit which inspired the scriptural author must also inspire the scriptural exegete. This inspiration is necessary because scriptural passages need to be interpreted in light of each other, and the Spirit enables the exegete to discern and apply the more general meaning of Scripture to the interpretation of a specific passage.

But the assistance of the Spirit is also necessary because Scripture is written in human language, which is inherently incapable of adequately conveying the divine truth which it is meant to convey. Due to the frailty of human language, Scripture can only indicate or point to the divine truth which lies beyond it. The interpreter of Scripture can only discern this truth under the direction of the Spirit.

Thus, Origen understands Scripture to consist of two levels: the "bodily" level, the literal or proper meaning of Scripture, and the "spiritual" level. Although Origen presents a theory which describes three levels of meaning within Scripture, which includes a "psychic" or

"soul" level of meaning between the bodily and spiritual levels, the practical application of his theory relies upon a bi-level understanding of Scripture. The intermediate, psychic level exists as a way of discussing the spiritual level of meaning in finite human terms. The level of meaning which corresponds to the soul refers to the needs and circumstances of the spiritually immature or imperfect. Nevertheless, this level deals with spiritual concerns.

The three levels of Origen's theory of Scripture are best identified as the bodily meaning of Scripture, the finite (or imperfect) spiritual meaning, and the infinite (or perfect) spiritual meaning. Therefore, there are actually two levels of meaning within Scripture: the bodily and the spiritual. But the spiritual meaning might be either finite and provisional, or infinite and perfect.

Origen thinks that the relationship between the bodily and spiritual meanings of Scripture roughly corresponds to the relationship between the human body and soul. The bodily meaning of Scripture "clothes"--and to some extent, therefore, conceals--the spiritual meaning. But this concealment is actually an effective form of communication. By being hidden within the bodily meaning of Scripture, the spiritual meaning acts as a lure to the curiosity of the learned, and inspires the respect of the unlearned. The concealment of the spiritual meaning is a more effective mode of communicating this meaning than an explicit state-

ment of this deeper level of meaning.

The bodily meaning of Scripture is able to point to and communicate the spiritual meaning through the errors which God incorporates in the bodily meaning. Impossibilities, absurdities and non-factual aspects of the literal meaning of Scripture indicate the existence of the spiritual meaning. Furthermore, these flaws in the literal sense of Scripture provide clues about the content of the spiritual meaning. Other instances in Scripture where these same problematic passages occur establish a pattern of symbolism which enables the correct spiritual interpretation of specific passages. This pattern of symbolism provides a bridgehead between the bodily meaning of Scripture and the spiritual meaning. Once the connection between these two levels of meaning has been established through the symbolism involved in a particular, literally non-factual passage, the entire text which contains this passage can be interpreted on the spiritual level.

Origen's overall understanding of Scripture provides a context within which his interpretations of the two stories of the creation of man can be discussed. The next chapter of this thesis will examine these interpretations.

## CHAPTER II

### ORIGEN'S INTERPRETATIONS OF GEN 1:26-30 AND GEN 2:4-9

Since Origen's Commentary on Genesis has been lost, the principal source for Origen's interpretation of the first creation of man story in Gen 1:26-30 is the last six chapters of his first Homily on Genesis, which deal directly with the interpretation of these verses. In his homilies, Origen is primarily concerned with the edification of the Church. Therefore, the Homilies tend to stress the spiritual content of Scripture over the literal content, since an appreciation of the spiritual meaning of Scripture is an important advance in the spiritual life of the individual and the Church.<sup>1</sup>

But Origen's first Homily on Genesis particularly tends to focus upon the moral aspects of this higher sense of Scripture. In this work, Origen is not primarily concerned with presenting truths about the creation and arrangement of the world; cosmology is not really an issue throughout the entire homily. Neither is the creation of man, in itself, a primary concern in this work. Instead, Origen wishes to discuss the 'moral psychology' implicit within the story of the creation of man.<sup>2</sup> In other words, Origen is less interested in discussing the description of human nature embedded in the story of man's creation, and

far more interested in discussing the moral demands which are made upon man. Nevertheless, since the nature of the human individual in some sense determines the conduct proper to the individual, a great deal of Origen's anthropology is contained in the interpretation of Gen 1:26-30 found in the last part of his first Homily on Genesis. An implicit anthropology lies behind the explicitly moral allegory which Origen presents in this work.

Just as the overall intention of the first Homily on Genesis colors the manner in which Origen interprets Gen 1:26-30, and also the manner in which the anthropology implicit in this interpretation may be extracted, so also do the contexts of Origen's other works which contain an interpretation of this passage color that interpretation. In each case, these contexts must be taken into account, in order to retrieve the anthropological implications contained within the exegesis. As a rule, the works which contain allusions to Gen 1:26-30, other than the first Homily on Genesis, actually interpret other scriptural passages. Consistent with his overall exegetical method, Origen uses Gen 1:26-30 to interpret other scriptural texts when a key word or phrase appears in both passages. Origen also uses this story of the creation of man to reinforce theological positions which he presents in his more theoretical work, De Principiis. Finally, Origen interprets both creation stories in the Contra Celsum, in which he is attempting to de-

fend the legitimacy of the Jewish-Christian Scriptures, and their superiority over pagan writings.

Fortunately, in each of these cases, the overall context leads Origen to emphasize the spiritual meaning of the texts with which he works, and this is precisely the level in which Origen finds and explains eternal truths--such as the fundamental nature of man, man's relationship with God, and the doctrines of the Church concerning man's salvation. But since a scriptural passage can contain more than one spiritual meaning, different contexts will require that Origen interpret the same passage differently.

The procedure followed in this chapter will attempt to accommodate this variation. First, Origen's exegesis of Gen 1:26-30 in his first Homily on Genesis will be presented. Then the key anthropological points of this exegesis will be compared to the points made in the interpretations of this passage found in other works. An attempt will be made to identify the consistent features of Origen's exegesis of this passage, and to place the variations of his interpretation within a coherent framework. A similar procedure will then be used in examining Origen's exegesis of Gen 2:4-9.

## I. Origen's First Homily on Genesis

Origen begins his examination of Gen 1:26-30 in the last half of chapter 12 of his first Homily on Genesis.

The first half of this chapter focuses upon the "dominion" which man is to exercise over the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven and the animals on the earth, and the whole earth itself. Origen has already discussed what these creatures symbolically represent. The water symbolizes man's mind; fish therefore represent affections and desires which arise from and move in the mind.<sup>3</sup> Birds are heavenly impulses. Beasts and creeping creatures, which are brought forth from and move upon the earth, are carnal impulses; Origen consistently interprets the earth itself as representing the body.<sup>4</sup> Since man is given dominion over all these creatures, Origen believes Gen 1:26 indicates that man's mind, which produces "according to the spiritual sense" and which is therefore the more divine aspect of man, should rule the body and all that it produces "according to the carnal sense." God intends man's mind, and the spiritual impulses and desires which proceed from the mind, to rule and restrain man's carnal impulses and desires.

In the last part of chapter 12 of his first Homily on Genesis, Origen turns his attention to the implications concerning man's place in the universe which the words "And God said, Let us make man..." have. He notes that most of creation has been created at the command of God, that is, by God saying, "Let there be...." But the first "elements" of the creation story, heaven and earth, the two great lights in the heavens and man are all described as being direct



works of God: Scripture has the first two described as "And God made..."; man's creation is narrated by "And God said, Let us make..." and later, "And God made..." For Origen, this similarity in the narrative indicates some kind of similarity between "the heaven and the earth" of Gen 1:1, the two great lights of Gen 1:16, and man, at least in terms of their prestige in the created order. Since these things are the direct works of God, and not just the result of his command, they have a somewhat higher position in the universe. Thus man is the equal of these other direct works of God, and is destined to share aspects of their relationship to God. He is promised the kingdom of heaven, the inheritance of a good land, and the brilliance of the sun, when he has reached perfection.<sup>5</sup>

Next, Origen tries to analyze who it is that is made in the image and likeness of God. Since God is not corporeal, it cannot be that corporeal man is made in God's image; the form of the body cannot contain the image of God. (An important aside indicates that corporeal man is the subject of Gen 2:4-9: corporeal man is "formed" not "made.") Instead, Origen claims that it is our "inner," incorporeal man that is made in the image of God. The possessive pronoun is important: one aspect of our human natures is the subject of Gen 1:26-30.<sup>6</sup> This verse does not refer to another sort of human, but to one aspect of our own selves of which we may or may not be aware.

The "inner" man to which this verse refers is invisible, incorporeal, incorruptible and immortal. These qualities seem to be the sense in which the inner man is made in God's image. Since the inner man has these qualities, we know that it is the inner man that has been created in the image of God.<sup>7</sup>

At this point, Origen rebukes those who think that God's image should be understood corporeally. Such an interpretation involves an anthropomorphic understanding of God which Origen categorically rejects. God cannot be conceived of in spatial or corporeal terms; therefore, God's image cannot be conceived of in these terms.

Origen also rejects the concept of the "whole man" being the image of God. Origen reemphasizes his understanding of man as a composite creature; man is made up of various hierarchically related parts. Man's spirit or mind is meant to rule his body. But Origen insists that we cannot speak of different, unequal parts existing in God. It makes no sense to think of God as having one part which rules over another. Therefore, the composite nature of man, and the harmonious relationship between the different aspects of man's nature, is not the image of God which man possesses. Only the "inner man," the spirit or reason within man can adequately reflect the simplicity of the divine nature, and therefore deserve the title "image of God."

In the course of this argument, Origen makes refer-

ence to at least two, and possibly three types of men. He clearly indicates that there are those who are "citizens of heaven," the perfect. He makes an equally clear reference to those "involved in earthly details," who are far removed from God's influence, at least in terms of desire for God. But when Origen asserts that this latter type of man can be changed, he may indicate the existence of a third group: "those who have their treasures in heaven"--but who are not yet themselves citizens of heaven.

The heart of Origen's exegesis of "And God said, Let us make man according to our image and likeness" focuses on the words "according," "likeness" and "image." He first asks what the image of God is, to which likeness man is to be formed. This question seems to indicate that "image" is not identical to "likeness" for Origen. Strictly speaking, the image is the model to which something is made similar; the likeness is the similarity to the model in what is made according to the model.<sup>8</sup> Using various citations, Origen asserts that the only image of God to which man could have been made similar is the Savior, Jesus Christ, the Word of God. Thus, from the very beginning, the "inner," spiritual man has a correspondence, a relationship with the Word, the Savior.

This relationship predetermines the pattern of man's redemption. The fall was man's laying aside the image of the Savior, to adopt another image, that of the evil one.

Therefore, to save man, the Savior adopted the image of man. He did so, due to his original, natural relationship with man; he did this, because this method corresponded to and reversed the pattern of the fall. The fall of man was accomplished by man's rejection of his similarity to the Logos. The redemption of man is accomplished by the Savior's reassertion of this similarity, through assuming human nature. The process of salvation is the process of renewing the image of the Savior in the inner man; being made similar, once again, to our original prototype. Likeness to the Savior is our natural condition; the image of the evil one is foreign to us by nature, but by "beholding the image of the devil," we have adopted this image. But by beholding the image of God, man can be returned to likeness with the image of God, and this process is more sure, since this transformation is a return to what is natural for man.<sup>9</sup>

Two significant implications are contained in this analysis of the human condition. The first is that the recovery process is more sure than the process of corruption, not only because the "model" (and in some sense, the agent) of recuperation is stronger than the "model" (and agent) of corruption--that is, the Savior is superior to the devil--but also because returning to what is natural is easier than abandoning what is natural. A second important implication is the role of "beholding" and contemplation in both the process of the fall and the process of salvation.

Origen does not explain this role, but in some way, contemplation connects the original and final states of man in both processes.

Origen's consideration of the next verse is little more than a digression. He gives two different "literal" accounts of why, at this point in this creation story, Scripture records that God created man "male and female." The first reason is to provide a credible context for the blessing "increase and multiply." Without sexual differentiation, this command is not believable, because the joining of the two sexes is the only way man knows of increasing and multiplying. Or it is possible that this verse merely reflects the proper coordination of two related but dissimilar elements which characterizes God's creation; everything which God creates is created in harmony and with an appropriate conjoining partner. Thus heaven and earth, and the sun and the moon (the other two examples of God's "own" creation) are paired in a kind of conjunction, and mankind should also involve a similar conjunction of male and female. But even so, this verse is recorded in "anticipation"; unlike the heaven and the earth, and the sun and the moon, man is not actually "conjoined" by the differentiation of male and female until later, presumably after mankind is embodied.<sup>10</sup>

The second and spiritual meaning of this verse is more relevant to the anthropological view Origen seems to

be establishing. This verse indicates that the inner man, which is the aspect of human nature created in the image of God, consists of two hierarchically related parts, spirit (male) and soul (female).<sup>11</sup> When these two parts are in accord, their union is "fruitful": they produce good inclinations according to the command to increase and multiply. More specifically, when these two elements of the inner man are in harmony, they are able to "fill the earth and have dominion over it." As has been his practice throughout this homily, Origen takes "earth" to refer figuratively to the flesh, and the carnal desires that arise from the embodiment of the inner man. When the inner man is in harmony, the flesh is properly subjected to the inner man, and the inclinations of the flesh are able to be turned to better purposes. When the soul is in harmony with the spirit --and due to the hierarchical relationship which Origen seems to presuppose between the two, this means when the soul is obedient to, or aligned with, the spirit--then the flesh is obedient to the will of the spirit.

But if the soul turns toward the flesh, and the desires of the flesh, the union will be between the soul and the flesh, and this union is "adulterous" and unfruitful. Such a soul does not increase and multiply, but is condemned as a harlot. This is not a very explicit description of such a "rebellious" or "adulterous" soul. The crucial question is whether or not the soul is corrupted by this union

with the flesh. If it is, then only the spiritual part of the inner man is made in God's image, since this is the only incorruptible part of the inner man. If the soul is not corrupted by this union, it is unclear what damage, if any, has been done to the soul. It may be that the harm of such a union rests only with the "offspring": the inclinations which such a union produces.<sup>12</sup> These inclinations will be barren and unfruitful. The appropriate union between the soul and the spirit will not exist and therefore will not produce good inclinations. Neither the soul nor the spirit will have suffered damage to their essences, but their function of producing good inclinations will have been frustrated.

The interpretation of Gen 1:28 focuses on desires and inclinations of the soul. The inner man is given dominion over fish and birds, and animals and creeping things. Consistent with Origen's established practice of interpreting the upper waters as the mind (or the spirit), and earth as the flesh, the fish and birds symbolize rational and heavenly thoughts and inclinations; the animals and creeping things represent carnal desires and impulses. Apparently, all of these will exist regardless of the harmony or disharmony of the spirit and the soul. But the "saints," those whose spirits rule their souls, and therefore also hold the flesh in subjection, have preserved God's blessing of having dominion over all such thoughts, inclinations, desires and

impulses. In the lives of the saints, "the whole man is guided by the will of the spirit." In sinners, where the proper orientation of soul toward spirit is lost, the base and carnal impulses have dominion over the whole man.<sup>13</sup>

An interesting issue arising from all this is the role of the body. It does not seem to play an active role --and probably should not play any role at all, since the inner man in question in this entire exegesis is not yet embodied (unless we assume that all of this is also said "in anticipation").<sup>14</sup> Yet there are carnal impulses and desires, apparently belonging to a disembodied soul. It is possible that Origen maintains that the soul has some sort of desire for the flesh (hence, "carnal desires"), but that these desires may have a part to play, or at least may be used, in the relationship of the spirit to the soul. But if the soul does not turn the desires to good use, but turns towards them instead, then eventually this inner man will be embodied. But it is not clear what sort of thing the soul is, which can have carnal desires without a body.

As if in support of the odd theory that "carnal" desires can contribute positively to the relationship of the soul to the spirit, and thus to the "inner man" as a whole, Origen deals with the dietary arrangement of the first creation in an allegorical fashion which explains how this can be the case. Once again, the products of the earth (like all other things associated with the earth in the narrative)



is understood as being carnal. Thus the vegetation given to the inner man as food represents carnal desires, or bodily affections. These can be turned to good use, and such seems to be their original purpose. Origen uses positive instances of indignation and concupiscence, drawn from various scriptural passages, to reinforce this point. But such affections can be used against the will of the spirit, which is rational, and the irrational indulgence of these affections makes them "food for beasts"--that is, such a course encourages and reinforces the dominion of carnal desires over the sinning human individual. The fact that the narrative has God giving these "plants" of bodily affections to man as food, but only observing that these same plants are food for beasts reinforces Origen's interpretation. God's command reveals God's intention for these affections; God's observation reflects God's judgment upon the misuse of these affections.<sup>15</sup>

In his first Homily on Genesis, Origen draws three conclusions from his interpretation of Gen 1:26-30. First, he maintains that this passage witnesses to the fact that only the "inner man" has been made according to the image of God. Origen offers two proofs of this assertion. The inner man is incorporeal, immortal and incorruptible, and in this way the inner man is similar to God. No other aspect of the human individual can claim such similarity to God. God is

not corporeal, nor is God a composite being. So neither the body, which is corporeal, nor the whole man, which is composite, can be similar to God.

Origen qualifies the similarity which exists between God and man by insisting that actually, man is similar to the Logos. The Word of God is the image of God, and man has been made according to this image. This is the second conclusion which Origen draws from his interpretation of Gen 1:26-30.

Finally, Origen turns his attention back to man's nature, and concludes that Gen 1:26-30 reveals the tripartite character of man's nature, and the proper relationship which these parts should have to each other. Man is composed of spirit, soul and body. Since the spirit is the highest aspect of man's nature, Origen concludes that man's spirit is the specific aspect which has been made according to the image of God. When the spirit rules over the soul, their union produces overall harmony within man. Man's body, and carnal desires, are dominated and turned to good use by this union. But if the soul turns to the body, the body and its desires and impulses will rule the soul and the spirit.

These three conclusions are the basis for comparing Origen's other interpretations of Gen 1:26-30 with the interpretation found in his first Homily on Genesis.

## II. Theological/Anthropological Aspects of Other Interpretations of Gen 1:26-30

Origen's exegesis of Gen 1:26-30 in his first Homily on Genesis clearly indicates that when Origen deals with this scriptural text, he believes that the relationship of the individual to God is the primary issue. But the text presents him with the problem of dealing with three distinct aspects of this relationship. These problematic aspects shape Origen's interpretations of this text found in his other writings as well. The problem is the question of how "being made according to the image and likeness of God" is to be interpreted. Clearly this phrase indicates some similarity between the individual and God, but Origen feels obliged to specify what sort of similarity this text implies. Does this similarity apply to the essences of God and the individual, or to their activities, or to their accidental characteristics? And what is the content of the similarity between God and the individual? In his first Homily on Genesis, Origen asserts that man is similar to God in the sense that both are immortal, invisible and incorruptible. But other interpretations present alternatives for the content of this similarity. When Origen interprets Gen 1:26-30, questions of this sort tend to arise, and Origen's answers are not always the same in every case.

A second problematic aspect of the relation between God and man which Origen finds in Gen 1:26-30 is the question of the relationship between man and the Word of God

implied in this text. As we have seen in the first Homily on Genesis, Origen finds a reference to the Logos in this text in the phrase "image of God." The way man is related to the Logos is one link which Origen himself forges between the anthropology he finds expressed in Gen 1:26-30, and the soteriology which this anthropological view predetermines. Therefore, it is natural that the relationship between the Logos and man is a recurrent topic in Origen's interpretations of Gen 1:26-30.

Finally, and most importantly in regard to Origen's theological anthropology, Origen attempts to interpret Gen 1:26-30 in such a way as to discover what aspect of man is made according to the image and likeness of God. We have seen that Origen struggles with the question of how man is similar to God by discussing the possible characteristics which God and man have in common. But Origen also struggles with the question of what part of man bears this similarity with God. This latter question is the crucial anthropological point in Origen's interpretation of the creation of man stories. Origen tries to go beyond the content of the similarity between God and man to determine what aspect of man's nature is essentially divine. Of the three aspects of the God-man relationship which arise in Origen's interpretations of Gen 1:26-30, this topic occurs most often, and receives the greatest amount of attention. The importance which this topic has in Origen's interpretation of Gen 1:26-

30 indicates that Origen finds this text a major source of information (or at least, of confirmation) for his theological anthropology.

Each of these problematic aspects, and the various ways Origen deals with them in his primary interpretations of Gen 1:26-30, will be examined in turn. Where Origen's interpretations differ in regard to each of these aspects, we will take careful note of the context of the various interpretations, and attempt to locate the reason for the variation. The first issue to be discussed is that of the nature of the similarity between God and man.

#### A. The "Likeness" and the "Image" of God

Origen's first step in describing the nature of the similarity between God and man in his first Homily on Genesis is to make a distinction between the "image" of God, and the "likeness" of God mentioned in Gen 1:26. As Origen presents it in this homily, the image of God is the Savior, the model or prototype according to which the inner man is made; the "likeness" simply refers to how the inner man is made according to the model. The sense is that Gen 1:26 simply means "let us make man like the Savior, who is the image of God."

Origen continues to be concerned about the distinction between the image and the likeness mentioned in Gen 1:26, but the interpretation of this distinction varies.

At one point in De Principiis, Origen seems to think this distinction is a deliberate discrepancy in the scriptural text. While Gen 1:26 records God saying "Let us make man according to our own image and likeness," Gen 1:27 describes God as having made man "according to the image of God."

The making of man according to God's likeness has not been recorded by Scripture, although Scripture "promises" it. Origen takes this to mean that being made according to God's likeness is a prophecy: this will be culmination of man's existence. The image of God has been given to the inner man from his first creation, but the likeness of God will be given to man as the reward and goal of achieving perfection. Origen construes "likeness" in this case as referring to something like an "image"--that is, a degree of similarity--but a greater, more perfect similarity than an "image." The more perfect similarity is the end product of a perfected life.<sup>16</sup>

Origen draws this same distinction between the "image" and the "likeness" of God in Contra Celsum, but he is more specific about what constitutes a perfected life in this later work. Being made in the likeness of God is the result of leading a virtuous life; being made in God's image is something inherent to the human individual.<sup>17</sup> The point of this citation in Origen's argument is that Christians do not believe that man, as he exists in this world, is in every way like God. Such perfect similitude with God be-

longs only to the perfected soul. The image of God, which Christians believe every man to possess, does not involve such perfect similitude.<sup>18</sup>

Origen's distinction between the image of God which all living men possess, and the likeness to God which is the destiny of the perfect man, indicates that the similarity between God and man which is due to man being made according to the image of God is not a complete similarity. By making this distinction, Origen places the living man at a distance from God in order to emphasize the closer similarity of the perfected man with God.

Origen also stresses the difference between the living man and God when he discusses why Scripture describes man as being made according to the image of God, and not as an image of God. As we have seen in his first Homily on Genesis, Origen tends to identify the Savior, the Word of God, as the image of God. Man is made according to this image. Therefore, man is not himself the image of God. The implication of this interpretation in regard to the relationship between man and the Logos will be discussed below. But this interpretation also has implications regarding the nature of the similarity between God the Father and man. Origen uses this text to stress both the relationship of man to the Logos, and also to emphasize that man is not similar to God in essence. In Contra Celsum, this latter emphasis is more prominent, because Origen is attempting to discredit

Celsus' criticism of Christianity's high regard for man. The occurrence of this same theme in other, less polemical, works indicates that Origen continues to insist on maintaining a distinction between the nature of God and human nature.<sup>19</sup> But Contra Celsum contains the most explicit description of the difference. As mentioned above, the similarity between God and man is related to the possession and exercise of virtue. Origen interprets the fact that man has been made according to the image of God, and not made as an image of God, to indicate that while God possesses virtue by his very nature, man possesses virtue only in imitation of God.<sup>20</sup> Being made according to God's image ensures man of the capacity for virtue; the actual acquisition and exercise of virtue is not, however, guaranteed in man's nature.

In a fragment of a lost work of Origen, the exercise of virtue is once again related to the phrase "the image of God." In this work, Origen uses this phrase to refer to the similarity between God and man. Man's capacity for virtue is the element in man's existence which is Godlike. God has made man like himself in order to enable man to act virtuously. The capacity for virtue exists in man so that man will act virtuously and become even more Godlike.<sup>21</sup> Once again, the ability to act virtuously is part of the nature God has given to man. But the actual exercise of virtue is left for man to achieve on his own.



## B. Man's Relationship to the Logos

Although Origen's interpretations of Gen 1:26-30 which have been examined have tended to stress the distance between God the Father and man, these interpretations have also emphasized the special relationship which exists between the Word of God and man. Origen habitually identifies the Logos as the image of God, according to which man is made.<sup>22</sup> This identification is natural, since Origen links the term "image of God" found in Genesis with Paul's assertion that the Christ is "the image of the invisible God."<sup>23</sup>

Origen explicitly forges this link in De Principiis, as he attempts to explain the relationship between God the Father and the Logos. Origen explains that the word "image" has two distinct meanings in Scripture. "Image" may mean an object which has been crafted in such a way that it resembles the original model. Origen maintains that this is the sense in which Gen 1:26-27 uses the term "image." On the other hand, the term may be applied to a child who possesses the same features and characteristics of his parents. The latter usage implies a unity of nature and substance between the image and the model according to which the image is formed. This is the sense the word image is used in Colossians. But in regard to Gen 1:26-27, Origen implies that man does not share essentially in God's nature or substance. Origen describes the similarity to God found in man as a

crafted similarity, not an essential one.<sup>24</sup>

In this passage, Origen maintains that the Logos possesses an essential similarity with God the Father. The relationship between the Logos and man is not discussed explicitly, but clearly the Logos possesses essentially what man possesses only derivatively. In this context, the Logos seems to be a model according to which man is created, just as Origen has asserted in his first Homily on Genesis.

But in a later homily on Genesis, the relationship between man and the Logos is interpreted differently. In his thirteenth Homily on Genesis, Origen describes the Logos as the craftsman who creates the similarity to God, the image of God which is in man. The ambiguity which appears in Origen's first Homily on Genesis reappears here: the Logos is both the model for, and the agent who produces, the image of God in man.<sup>25</sup>

A passage in Origen's Commentary on the Song of Songs also indicates that being made in the image of God implies a specific sort of relationship with the Logos, and this relationship influences the course of man's salvation. Since the soul has been created in the image of God, the soul receives its beauty by coming to the Word of God.<sup>26</sup> The relationship between the Logos and man in this instance is primarily that of a model to copy, but includes aspects of the Platonic theory of participation. Origen implies that by turning towards the Logos, man can come to share in

some quality of the Logos. This interpretation emphasizes the activity of man, i.e., turning towards the Logos, but the concept of a "copy" participating in its archetype, and thus sharing in some characteristics of the archetype has exerted an influence.

In his Commentary on the Gospel of John, Origen tries to clarify what the image of God in man is, and how man is related to the Logos. The context for Origen's remarks is his argument advocating the acceptance of a modified "Euhemerism"--the idea that individuals may be "deified." Origen seems to assert that this can actually occur, but that it is the result of the one, true God bestowing divinity upon worthy individuals.<sup>27</sup> This process of "bestowing divinity" takes place in relation to the Word of God. The Word of God is the divinity of those who are made gods by the one God. Bestowing divinity means that God forms the "gods," in some way using himself as a model, and thus allows these "gods" to share in his divine essence. But the actual archetype for these images of God is the Word of God. To clarify the situation, Origen proposes a series of proportions. The faculty of reason in rational creatures is related to the Logos, just as the Logos is related to God the Father. Thus, just as the Logos is the image of God, reason in the human individual is the image of the Logos.<sup>28</sup>

In his Commentary on the Gospel of John, Origen once again stresses that the Logos is the model for the divine

quality in man. But the proportions which he constructs also imply some sort of agency on the part of the Logos in establishing this divine quality in man. This work contains another example of Origen's tendency to describe the relationship between the Logos and man as the relationship between a Platonic model or archetype, and a copy. Both similarity and derivation are aspects of this relationship.

### C. The Divine Aspect of Man

The final ambiguity in reference to the general relationship between God and man which Origen finds in Gen 1:26-30, and which he frequently addresses in his interpretations of this passage, is the question of what part of man is the locus for the similarity between God and man. Origen's answer to this question varies in detail in his different interpretations, but Origen maintains one overriding point with great consistency. The inner, spiritual man is that aspect of the human individual who has been made according to the image of God. The corporeal aspect of the human individual is repeatedly excluded from sharing in the image of God. But there is some variation in the way Origen identifies what part of the inner man does share in this image.

In his first Homily on Genesis, Origen asserts that the spirit is the aspect of the human individual which carries a likeness to God, since only this aspect of the human

individual is immortal and incorruptible, just as God is immortal and incorruptible. In other interpretations of Genesis, Origen supposes that the virtues are the content of the similarity between God and man. This supposition influences Origen's proof that the inner man is the bearer of God's image in Contra Celsum. Here, Origen proves this assertion by eliminating the alternatives. Origen assumes that the human creature is made up of two parts: a body, and "the inner man," which seems to mean the soul. If the body is the part which is made in God's image, then the superior part of the human, the soul, is not made in God's image. In that case, the part of man made in God's image would be ruled by a part which is not in God's image, which is absurd. If both body and soul are that which has been made in God's image, then God must be a composite being, since a creature made according to his image is composite. This would imply that God had parts of varying degrees of superiority and inferiority; this is also absurd. Therefore, it must be the soul, or the inner man, which has been made in God's image: there is no other alternative.<sup>29</sup>

But in this same section of Contra Celsum, Origen also argues that the part of man which is made in the image of God is that part which has never had, or no longer has, anything to do with the "old man." Clearly, this is a reference to sinful man, the "old Adam." Origen's point seems to be that the part of man made in God's image cannot

have any necessary or inevitable connection with the sinful life: if it has been in contact with sin, this contact is unnatural to it. But by implication, the parts of man which have not been made in the image of God do have some sort of inevitable connection with the sinful life. Since the inner, spiritual man is the only part which is free of a more or less necessary connection with sin, it is the part of man which has been made in God's image.

A shift has occurred in Origen's understanding of the content of the similarity between God and man. In his first Homily on Genesis, Origen states that God and man are similar in that both are immortal, invisible and incorruptible. In Contra Celsum, Origen believes that God and man are similar in that both are free from a necessary connection with sin, and are therefore capable of maintaining virtue. In both cases, a key aspect of the similarity between God and man is stability or permanence. When the similarity is thought of as immortality, the permanent existence of God and man is stressed. When the content of the similarity is thought of as virtue, Origen's discussion dwells on the fact that both God and man (or at least that part of man which is similar to God) are capable of maintaining virtue within themselves. Therefore, Origen implies that the similarity between God and man must itself exist in some permanent way. The image of God within man is stable and permanent because God himself is unchanging. The aspect

of man which possesses the image of God must also be permanent and enduring, or else it would not be able to possess this image.

The stability of the image of God in man is once again a primary issue in his thirteenth Homily on Genesis. Once again, Origen stresses that it is the inner man who has been made in God's image, but he points out that this image cannot be "seen" when this inner man is "dirty," that is, when the inner man has assumed the image of earthliness, carnality. But the obscured image of God is not lost by this assumption of a contrary image. The image of God always remains in man, even if an earthly image is drawn over it.<sup>30</sup>

But in other passages in which Origen interprets Gen 1:26-30, the damage which sin does to the image of God in man seems to go beyond obscuring this image. Origen's seventh Homily on Ezekiel describes the damage done to the inner man by inappropriate love as affecting the soul's "spirit-sense." Sinners fall in love with the soul in an inappropriate fashion, thus committing "spiritual impurity." This spiritual impurity injures the soul: its "spirit-sense" is corrupted. At this point then, the spiritual sense of the soul, that aspect of the inner man which contains the image of God, is corrupted.<sup>31</sup>

The confusion concerning the stability of the divine aspect of man is related to Origen's inconsistency in iden-

tifying what aspect of man is divine, i.e., capable of bearing the image of God. Where the image of God in man is described as permanent and enduring, Origen tends to speak of the spirit of man as possessing the image of God.<sup>32</sup> But in other interpretations, the broader term "inner man" is used to identify the locus of the image of God.<sup>33</sup>

Origen presents us with a third alternative. In his Exhortation to Martyrdom, Origen identifies the soul as being that which is made according to the image of God. This is the reason why the soul is more precious than the body.<sup>34</sup> This may be an instance where Origen is speaking loosely of the inner man as being simply the soul, rather than both the soul and the spirit. If this is the case, the interpretations where Origen identifies the soul as the bearer of God's image differ from other interpretations where the spirit bears this image in that the former interpretations rely upon a bi-level anthropology, and the latter interpretations rely upon a tri-level anthropology. This same passage from the Exhortation to Martyrdom does include an implication that the soul can become something better than a soul--ie., a spirit--by suffering martyrdom. Therefore, this passage seems to imply a modified tri-level anthropology. The soul is the condition of the spirit, where the spirit belongs to a living human being. In terms of the individual's present condition, there are two levels within the individual: the body and the soul, the outer man and



the inner man. But in terms of the individual's future, the soul is to be liberated from the flesh and become a spirit once again.<sup>35</sup>

If this is how Origen's understands the human condition, then the variation in his interpretations of Gen 1:26-30 is understandable. The "inner man," the spirit, and the soul all refer to the same entity, the spiritual aspect of man. Origen distinguishes between them in an attempt to communicate the difference between the spiritual capacity of the living man, and the spiritual capacity of the perfect man. When Origen speaks of the image of God residing in the spirit of man, his attention is focused on the final, perfect end of man's existence. When the soul is thought to bear the image of God, Origen emphasizes man's capacity to achieve this end.

In addition, the question of the corruptibility of the divine aspect of the human individual is somewhat clarified. The spirit itself is corruptible only insofar as it has become a soul, and may stay a soul for some time. But if the individual becomes enamoured of his current condition (thus falling in love with the soul), the influence of the soul's prior, strictly spiritual state will fade, and the return to this state will be hindered.

### III. The Second Story of the Creation of Man: Gen 2:4-9

In his first Homily on Genesis, Origen only briefly

refers to the second story of the creation of man in Gen 2:4-9. This second creation story receives much less attention than the first story of the creation of man in Gen 1:26-30 in all of Origen's writings. When Origen does interpret the second story of the creation of man, the results are in many ways the same as when he interprets the first story. His interpretations of Gen 2:4-9 vary depending upon the context in which the interpretations occur. Certain characteristics of Origen's theological anthropology appear in his interpretations of both stories. Nevertheless, Origen's interpretations of Gen 2:4-9 tend to deal with certain aspects of the human person which are not dealt with in his interpretations of Gen 1:26-30; other aspects of the human person are described differently. The most important aspect of Origen's interpretation of this second creation story is his discussion of the corporeality of human existence.

As mentioned briefly above, Origen identifies the second creation of man story found in Gen 2:4-9 as a description of the corporeal creation of man in his first Homily on Genesis.<sup>36</sup> This corporeal creation is not examined in any detail in this homily. Corporeality is not a primary concern in Origen's analysis of the human person. The primary concern of this homily is the discussion of man's moral obligations; Origen does not consider corporeality to be an important factor in this determination. Since

man's essence is spirit, man's primary duty is to the spiritual realm.

In the Prologue to his Commentary on the Song of Songs, Origen presents his most extensive interpretation of Gen 2:4-9. In this interpretation, Origen explicitly states that the two creation stories, Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9, refer to the creation of two "different" men. Gen 1:26-30 describes the creation of the inner man according to the image and likeness of God; Gen 2:4-9 describes the creation of the outer man, formed from the dust of the earth. The inner man is spiritual; the outer man is corporeal. But as Origen's references to Paul make clear, Origen actually thinks these creation stories describe the origins and characteristics of two aspects of the human individual, rather than two types of men. Origen refers to Paul's statement that every person is made up of two different men, the inner man and the outer man. Each aspect has been created apart from the other, but is currently found in every human individual.<sup>37</sup> Origen does not explicitly describe the manner in which these two distinct aspects have been united, nor the reason for this union. But since the outer man is explicitly identified as having been "formed from the dust of the earth," it is reasonable to suppose that Origen understands "God breathing into the face" of the corporeal man as the means by which God unites the inner and the outer man.

But even though Origen stresses the distinction

between the inner and outer man, which are united to form a given human individual, this is not the primary focus of his interpretation in the Prologue to his Commentary on the Song of Songs. Origen is more concerned with discussing the similarities between the two distinct aspects of the human individual which Scripture identifies as the inner and outer man. These similarities are extensive enough that Origen feels justified in using a common vocabulary in regard to each one.

Both the inner, spiritual man and the outer, corporeal man have "ages"; both the spirit and the body tend to develop in some kind of predictable pattern. Furthermore, both the inner man and the outer man can love. The corporeal aspect of man is capable of loving, and this love may be appropriate or inappropriate. In the same way, the spiritual aspect of man is capable of a different type of love--a spiritual love--and this type of love also may be appropriate or inappropriate. The exploration of love appropriate to the inner, spiritual man is the subject of Origen's Commentary on the Song of Songs.

In this interpretation of Gen 2:4-9, Origen argues that knowledge of the inner, spiritual man can be obtained by observing specific characteristics of the outer, corporeal man because the inner man shares some of these characteristics, albeit in a spiritual manner. Origen argues that although the love proper to the corporeal aspect of the

individual may be a rival or alternative to the love appropriate to the spiritual aspect, this is not the only way for an individual to love inappropriately. Spiritual love itself may be appropriate or inappropriate. Origen maintains that by observing the rules which govern corporeal love, we learn about what is appropriate and inappropriate in spiritual love. Within the context of this argument, Origen's distinction between the spiritual and corporeal aspects of human existence does not emphasize the antagonism between the two; on the contrary, the similarities between the two aspects are emphasized.<sup>38</sup>

In the Prologue to his Commentary on the Song of Songs, Origen interprets the second story of the creation of man as referring to the creation of the corporeal aspect of the human individual. It is no surprise, therefore, that the first clause of Gen 2:7 receives the most attention in this interpretation. Origen considers the fact that "the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground" as a clear indication that the corporeal creation of man is being discussed, as opposed to the earlier spiritual creation of man described in Gen 1:26-30. As we have seen in our analysis of his first Homily on Genesis, Origen believes all scriptural references to the earth and ground are to be understood as allegorical references to man's body.

But in Contra Celsum and De Principiis, when Origen interprets the second story of the creation of man, he fo-

cuses upon the rest of Gen 2:7. The emphasis on the formation of man from the dust of the ground disappears. The fact that God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" becomes the primary issue with which Origen is concerned.

In Contra Celsum, Origen states that when God breathed into the face of the man formed from the dust (that is, the outer, corporeal aspect of man), God "imparted a share of his incorruptible spirit to man."<sup>39</sup> Origen argues that this verse indicates that there is indeed an immortal and divine aspect of human existence. But in the course of this argument, Origen implies that the animating principle of man, that which makes man a living being, is this divine aspect. The spirit of man, which is itself a share of God's own spirit, is the animating principle of the human body. In this interpretation, Origen abandons his more usual tripartite anthropology in favor of a strictly dualistic anthropology. The spirit of man is invested with the function of the soul, as that which makes man alive. The fact that man is alive is taken as an indication that every man has a share in God's spirit.

In De Principiis, Origen presents a similar interpretation of Gen 2:7 as one possibility. Origen suggests that the breath of life might be understood as the gift of life, which God has given to all men. If this interpretation is accepted, Gen 2:7 indicates that every man has a

share in God. But in presenting this possibility, Origen does not identify this "share" in God as part of God's spirit. If the breath of God is to be understood as the spirit of God, i.e. the Holy Spirit, then Origen suggests that this verse figuratively describes the inspiration of the prophets, and the writers and interpreters of Scripture. In this case, Gen 2:7b simply indicates that God's spirit is given to the saints; the topic of the creation of man has disappeared.<sup>40</sup>

#### IV. Conclusion

This analysis of Origen's interpretations has been organized under the rubric of three anthropological questions which Origen addresses in these interpretations. While Origen does not answer these questions in the same way in every case, some kind of pattern may be discerned in his various responses.

In his attempt to specify the content of the similarity between God and man, his attempt to discern how much and in what way man is similar to God, Origen adopts one of two strategies. He either emphasizes a distinction between the image of God (which man currently possesses) and the likeness of God (which man will possess when he is perfect); or he emphasizes that man is made according to the image of God and not as an image of God. In both cases, Origen wants to stress that the current similarity between God and man is

limited. In the latter case, the distinction between being made according to the image of God and not as an image of God is made with the intent of avoiding an anthropomorphic idea of God; Origen wants to refute Celsus' accusation that Christians present a negative view of the divine since they consider man to be "just like God." In the former case, Origen distinguishes between the limited similarity with God which man currently possesses (the "image" of God) and the far greater similarity with God which the perfected man will possess (the "likeness" of God). In both cases, the result of Origen's interpretations stress a distance between God and man as he currently exists.

The second anthropological aspect found in Origen's interpretations of the creation of man stories reemphasizes the distance between God and man. Origen describes the Logos as the intermediary between God and man. Most often, the Logos acts as the model after which man has been formed. The Logos is himself the image of God, according to which man has been made. But frequently Origen describes the Logos as a more active intermediary between God and man: the Logos is the craftsman who establishes and renews the similarity between God and man.

The distance between God and man is accented by the mediation of the Logos in both cases. In conceiving the Logos as the model for man, Origen implies that man is not directly similar to God, but to the Logos. Man's similarity



to God is proportional to the similarity of the Logos to God. In conceiving the Logos as the craftsman of the similarity between God and man, Origen stresses the fact that this similarity is derivative. Man possesses a crafted similarity with God, such as the similarity between a portrait and the individual which the portrait depicts, rather than similarity in substance and essences, such as the similarity between a child and his parents.

But even as he tends to emphasize the distance between God and man, Origen insists that man does possess some kind of divine nature. He attempts to identify exactly what part of man's nature is divine. The corporeal, carnal aspect of man is repeatedly dismissed from consideration, since God cannot be considered corporeal. But although Origen consistently identifies the "inner man" as the locus of the divine nature in man, he is not consistent in his more precise terminology. Usually, the spirit is the aspect of man which carries within it similarity with God; sometimes the soul bears this honor.

This inconsistency may simply be symptomatic of Origen's tendency to describe existence as having three levels, while implicitly using a dualistic world view. Origen's distinction between body, soul and spirit is made within a Platonic understanding of reality, which distinguishes between the sensible and the ideal planes of existence. Before the implications which this tri-level/bi-level

theory has for Origen's interpretations of the creation of man stories, and for his theological anthropology, can be examined, we must first identify the sources of and influences upon Origen's interpretations.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE SOURCES OF ORIGEN'S INTERPRETATIONS

The analysis of Origen's interpretation of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7 in the previous chapter has provided the bulk of raw material which we will need to explore the theological anthropology, and its correlative soteriology, which Origen finds implicit in these creation of man stories. But before we can proceed with this exploration, our analysis of Origen's own interpretations must be augmented by an analysis of the various influences on Origen's interpretations of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7.

As we examine the various influences which help shape Origen's interpretations of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7, we will obtain valuable, and sometimes vital, information which will assist our understanding of Origen. By identifying the traditional elements in Origen's interpretations, the elements which Origen has taken up from the biblical exegetes who preceded him, we will be able to see the unique aspects of Origen's work. This contrast will be heightened by noticing what traditional elements Origen omits from his interpretations, and what traditional interpretations he feels obliged to refute.

A second benefit of analyzing the influences upon Origen's interpretations of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7 also

involves contrast. The inclusion of traditional elements brings a tone and perspective into Origen's work which is distinct from Origen's own. By identifying the occasions when Origen uses another exegete's work, we will be able to account for different nuances within Origen's writing without losing sight of Origen's own position.

Finally, Origen's interpretations sometimes include the assumption that his audience is as familiar with his predecessors as he is. At such times, Origen's interpretations may seem inconsistent or inexplicable because he fails to include all of the logical connections found in these sources; he simply uses their conclusions. In these cases, an understanding of Origen's sources is essential for understanding Origen.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to catalog and analyze all the various strands of tradition which Origen employs in his exegetical work, and all the influences which help shape his interpretations. This chapter will focus on the specific influences which affect Origen's interpretations of the two stories of the creation of man, and which can shed light on the theological anthropology that Origen discovers within these passages of Scripture. Therefore, this chapter will examine the influence which Clement of Alexandria and Philo of Alexandria have had on Origen's interpretation of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7.

Evidence exists which establishes that each of these

exegetes has influenced Origen's interpretation of the creation of man stories. Each of these exegetes has written a significant body of work, from which their own philosophical predispositions and theological positions can be determined. Therefore, it will be possible to explore both the exegetical traditions which Origen adopts from these two authors, and their philosophical and theological presuppositions which he inherits, and sometimes adapts. From this, we may obtain a clearer understanding of Origen's own philosophical understanding and theological agenda.

Special attention will be paid to the influence which Philo of Alexandria has had on Origen's interpretations of the two creation of man stories. Philo's influence on Origen seems to have been especially extensive. Philo and Origen share a common philosophical orientation. But more importantly, each of these interpreters of Scripture works from a different theological tradition. Therefore, even though they both interpret the same Scripture, and use similar vocabulary and philosophical categories in describing the theological anthropology they find implicit in the two stories of the creation of man, they necessarily differ in the content of that theological anthropology. By identifying and examining the adjustments which Origen makes to Philo's interpretations of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7, and where Origen departs from Philo's interpretations altogether, we may be able to discern the aspects of Origen's theo-

logical anthropology which are specifically related to his understanding of the Incarnation and Christian soteriology.

This chapter will begin with an examination of the influence which Clement of Alexandria's interpretations of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7 has had on Origen's interpretations. Clement shares Origen's cultural and philosophical milieu, and Origen's Christian theological orientation. Clement also has been influenced by Philo, and it is possible that some of Philo's influence on Origen has been communicated--and thus affected--by Clement.<sup>1</sup> But the largest part of this chapter will discuss the influence of Philo on Origen's interpretation of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7. This discussion will begin with an examination of the specific Philonic interpretations of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7 which appear in Origen's exegesis of the two creation of man stories. Then Origen's implicit use of Philonic interpretations will be examined in an effort to resolve certain inconsistencies in Origen's interpretations. Finally, the differences between the interpretations of Origen and Philo will be identified.

## I. The Influence of Clement of Alexandria

As soon as we begin to investigate the influence which Clement of Alexandria has had on Origen, we become involved in controversy. Some scholars, relying upon Eusebius' account of Origen's life, assume that Clement

actually instructed Origen.<sup>2</sup> But F. L. Cross doubts whether Origen has been influenced at all by Clement.<sup>3</sup> Many modern scholars concede that while there is no evidence that Origen had been taught by Clement, there is sufficient evidence to suppose that Origen has been influenced by Clement's work.<sup>4</sup> The extent of this influence is still disputed.

Fortunately, this thesis does not depend upon a resolution of this question. We do not need to predetermine the degree to which Clement has influenced Origen. Our task is to identify the instances where Clement interprets Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7, and determine if Origen uses these interpretations in his exegesis of the stories of man's creation and his theological speculations which arise from his exegesis. We may assume that Origen has some degree of familiarity with Clement's work, but we must also examine the relevant passages of Clement and Origen to determine how much this familiarity has influenced Origen's interpretation of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7.<sup>5</sup>

When Clement interprets Gen 1:26-27, he usually is concerned with discussing the moral obligation man has to imitate God. He often connects this discussion of the imitation of God with passages from the Greek philosophers which describe likeness with God in terms of justice, wisdom and virtue.<sup>6</sup> Clement has been heavily influenced by, and often employs, the Platonic understanding of "likeness" to God as the essence of a virtuous and happy life. Clement

tends to interpret the statement that man has been made according to the image and likeness of God as a moral directive (e.g., 'man should act in imitation of God') rather than as an anthropological description (e.g., 'man is similar to God').

The emphasis upon the moral obligation imposed upon man in Gen 1:26-27 is also reflected in Clement's distinction between the "image" and the "likeness" according to which man is created. Like Origen, Clement also states that what is "according to the image" has been given to man at man's creation, but what is "according to the likeness" is to be given as a result or reward of man's living a virtuous life.<sup>7</sup> This particular distinction between "image" and "likeness," "image" being part of man's original and present condition and "likeness" being the future condition of the man who has led a virtuous life, fits in well with Clement's emphasis upon the moral implications of Gen 1:26-27. By describing the "likeness" of God as man's perfected state, Clement is able to describe and encourage the specific attitudes and actions which bring man to this perfected state. But Clement uses the distinction between "image" as a present condition and "likeness" as a future condition only once. He makes other distinctions between the image and likeness of God alluded to in Gen 1:26-27 to describe the moral directives implicit in this creation story.<sup>8</sup>

Clement combines his understanding that the "image



of God" which man possesses is not identical with the "likeness of God" with a discussion of man's relationship with the Logos. Clement makes the traditional exegetical move of identifying the true image of God as the Logos, and asserts that man is modeled after the Logos.<sup>9</sup> But in two separate passages, Clement makes this move in connection with an explicit distinction between the "image of God" and the "likeness of God." When this occurs, his tendency to interpret man's similarity to God as a moral dictum rather than an anthropological datum is again prominent.

In the first of these passages (Strom. V,14), the combination of these two exegetical positions is straightforward. The "image of God" refers to the Logos, therefore man (specifically, man's mind) is the image of God's Image. But the "likeness" which man possesses is defined as a "divine correspondence." To explain what this "divine correspondence" is, Clement adduces scriptural passages describing man's obligation of obedience to God. The "likeness of God" which man possesses is therefore explained in terms of the imitation of God, but not in reference to man's perfected state. The distinction between the image and the likeness to God which are in man is no longer a distinction based on man's current state versus his future, perfected condition. Instead, this distinction is between the "image" as referring to a condition of man (being a copy of the Image of God), and the "likeness" which refers to an activi-

ty required of man (the imitation of God).<sup>10</sup>

The second combination of the concept of the "image of God" as referring to the Logos, and the distinction between the "image of God" in man and the "likeness of God" is somewhat less clear. In The Paedagogue, Clement identifies Christ (the Logos) as the maker and instructor of man, and as the one who effects man's salvation through his coming. Christ forms man from the dust, then regenerates man, gives him growth by water and the spirit, and trains man to salvation. In this way, Christ transforms the earth-born man into a heavenly being. In being formed from the dust, man has been created according to Christ's image. But Christ's subsequent activity--the regeneration, growth and training of man--fulfills the Scripture "Let us make man according to our own image and likeness."<sup>11</sup>

Here again, "image" refers to the created condition of man; "likeness" is the result of Christ's saving work. The image of God is bestowed upon all men by Christ when he creates them; the likeness of God is the result of Christ's example, his "training of man to salvation." Thus, the likeness of God comes after the image of God in temporal terms, but in this interpretation, it is not directly or exclusively the result of man's virtuous activity. Christ's activity is the central point of this interpretation.

In this interpretation of Gen 1:26-27, Clement stresses the active role of Christ, the Logos, in man's

re-creation, i.e., salvation. This emphasis is combined with the concept of man being modeled after Christ, who is himself the Image of God. Here Clement shares Origen's concept of the Logos as both the model of man's creation, and the agent who effects man's creation.<sup>12</sup>

Clement also includes a specific identification of the aspect of man which has been made according to God's image in some of his interpretations of Gen 1:26-27. This aspect is consistently identified as the mind, or the rational aspect of man.<sup>13</sup> Since he identifies the mind as the divine aspect of man, Clement ascribes the title "Son of Mind" to the Logos, after whom man is modeled. Man's rationality is the result of man's similarity to the Logos.<sup>14</sup>

The divinity of the rational aspect of man is also the main point of Clement's interpretations of Gen 2:6-7. Clement interprets these verses to show the dignity of man as a whole,<sup>15</sup> but he often emphasizes the surpassing dignity of the part of man which God breathed into man's face.<sup>16</sup> Clement identifies this part as the rational soul.<sup>17</sup>

Every time Clement interprets Gen 2:6-7, he includes an interpretation of Gen 1:26-27, which identifies the rational soul as the divine aspect of man. As Clement understands these two stories of the creation of man, each one is primarily concerned with the nature and proper activity of the rational aspect of man.<sup>18</sup> Clement makes very little

distinction between the two stories; both deal primarily with the mind of man. Clement does not encounter any difficulty in interpreting Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7 as different accounts of the same event. Clement never indicates that Gen 1:26-27 deals with an ideal or incorporeal creation while Gen 2:6-7 describes a corporeal creation.

At this point, Clement's interpretation of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7 differs sharply from Origen's. Origen insists on a sharp distinction between the two creation of man stories. Origen understands these two stories as describing two distinct events: the creation of "the inner man" and the creation of "the outer man." This understanding causes Origen to de-emphasize Gen 2:6-7, which he understands as describing the corporeal creation of man. But when he does refer to Gen 2:6-7, the corporeal aspect of man is acknowledged. Clement understands both stories as referring primarily to man's inner, intellectual nature.

From this brief survey of Clement's interpretations of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7, we can identify other elements which also appear in Origen's interpretation of these passages. First of all, the distinction between the image of God and the likeness of God which man possesses is prominent in both authors' work. But the precise distinction which is important to Origen's interpretation, the identification of the image of God as a current possession of man and the likeness of God as a future result of living a vir-

tuous life, appears only once in Clement. Clement has different ways of dealing with the difference between "image" and "likeness," combining this distinction with his understanding of the Logos as the image of God.

This identification of the Logos as the image of God, and thus the model for the creation of man, is a second common point between Clement and Origen. At the same time, both authors agree that the Logos is also an active agent in the creation of man. This double concept of the Logos as the model and the agent of man's creation arises from a common philosophical perspective which both Clement and Origen share with Philo, and will be discussed in the last section of this chapter.

A third characteristic common to Clement and Origen is that both authors link the role which the Logos plays in the creation of man with the role of the Logos in the salvation of man. For Origen, this link is made in reference to the fact that man has been made according to the image of the Logos. Since man has been made similar to the Logos, the salvation of man is related to the re-establishment of this similarity. The Logos accomplishes this by assuming human nature.<sup>19</sup>

But Clement links the role of the Logos in the first creation story of man even more closely to the role of the Logos in man's salvation. He interprets the first creation story as containing a prophetic, allegorical description of

the salvation of man.<sup>20</sup> The activity of the Logos in the creation and salvation of man has a special place in Clement's interpretation of Gen 1:26-27. The Logos brings about the salvation of man by training and enlightening man. Thus, Clement interprets Gen 1:26-27 in such a way to highlight the didactic element in the salvific activity of the Logos.

Origen, on the other hand, uses his own interpretation of Gen 1:26-27 to stress that man's salvation depends upon the re-establishment of man's original similarity to the Logos. Undoubtably, a didactic element is a key part of this process. But Origen's imagery, which he develops in his exegesis of Gen 1:26-27, tends to emphasize a change in man's condition (as well as man's knowledge) as an important aspect of the saving work of the Logos.

Finally, Clement consistently interprets Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7 as indicating that man's mind or reason is the aspect which is made according to the pattern of the Logos. Origen usually identifies this aspect as the spirit, soul or "inner man." While Origen is convinced that man's spirit includes or involves man's rational nature, he only infrequently identifies the spiritual aspect of man as the mind (nous) in his interpretations of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7.<sup>21</sup> Even though Clement and Origen share an understanding of the divine aspect of man as being the highest aspect of man's nature, reason, their vocabularies in dis-

cussing the divine aspect in man differ significantly.

From the above, we conclude that Clement and Origen share general concepts which undergird their interpretations of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7. But these two authors rarely deal with these texts in precisely the same way. Clement is oblivious to the exegetical problem which lies at the root of Origen's interpretations of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7; Clement sees no need to interpret these texts as accounts of different events. He understands both creation of man stories as describing the intellectual, spiritual aspect of man's existence. In this limited respect, Clement follows Philo in identifying man's mind as the "true man."<sup>22</sup>

Origen, in contrast with Clement, draws a sharp distinction between the two creation of man stories, believing them to be descriptions of two different events. Origen thinks that Gen 2:6-7 is an account of the creation of the corporeal aspect of man, while Gen 1:26-27 describes the creation of man's spiritual aspect. Origen is careful to distinguish between these two stories; Clement shows a strong tendency to conflate these two stories. Clearly, Clement does not have an extensive influence on the way Origen interprets these texts.

Since both Clement and Origen deal with the same texts, and since both share a similar philosophical perspective, some similarities in their interpretations are to be expected. In addition, both authors draw upon the same body

of traditional exegesis to assist them in their interpretations. But Clement and Origen treat these elements which contribute to their interpretations in significantly different ways. A comparison of the interpretations of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7 found in Clement and Origen makes three aspects of Origen's exegesis stand out in sharp relief.

First, Origen finds a sharp contrast between man as he currently exists and man as he will exist in his perfected condition in Gen 1:26, when God says "Let us make man according to our own image and likeness." The "image of God" is bestowed upon man in creation, and is therefore an intrinsic property of man. The "likeness of God" is a more perfect similarity to God, which is the result of a virtuous life. Clement perceives this contrast, but does not emphasize it.

Secondly, while Clement emphasizes the didactic element of the saving work of the Logos, Origen includes an additional element in his understanding of this work. Origen's primary conception of the saving work of the Logos centers on the re-establishment of the original similarity between the Logos and man, which is described in Gen 1:26-27.

Finally, Origen's insistence that the two creation of man stories be treated as distinct events implies an interest in (or at least an acknowledgement of) man's corporeal aspect which is entirely missing in Clement. The only



aspect of man which Clement sees emphasized in Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7 is man's spiritual, rational aspect. Origen understands these stories as describing both the spiritual and corporeal aspects of man.

One traditional source which Clement and Origen share is the exegetical work of Philo of Alexandria. We shall now turn to investigate Philo's interpretations of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7, and to explore the influence which these interpretations have had on Origen's exegesis of the creation of man stories.

## II. The Influence of Philo of Alexandria

Origen cites Philo by name, so he must be aware of Philo's work.<sup>23</sup> There is no controversy in scholarly circles about whether Philo has influenced Origen. Scholars disagree about the extent and content of this influence, but the fundamental question of the existence of this influence is not in question. For the purposes of this thesis, this solid conclusion is comforting but insufficient. The issue which must be addressed here is whether, and to what degree, Philo has influenced Origen's interpretation of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7, and how Origen has adapted Philo's interpretations.

The resolution of this issue makes three important contributions to understanding Origen's exegesis of the creation of man stories in Genesis. The first advantage of

a clear understanding of Philo's influence on Origen's interpretation of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7 may assist in the "rehabilitation" of Origen as an orthodox Christian theologian. Critics (and admirers) of Origen have pointed out that a good deal of Origen's soteriology relies upon a non-incarnational Logos theology.<sup>24</sup> This criticism accurately notes the prominence of the Logos as an intermediary between God and man in Origen's theological anthropology and consequent soteriology. But the role of Origen's interpretation of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7 in describing this intermediary function of the Logos is often neglected.

As we shall see in the first part of this examination of Philo's influence on Origen, Origen draws heavily from Philo's interpretations of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7 to develop his own Logos theology. But when Origen uses Philo's interpretations in his own work, he is using a non-Christian source. This usage introduces an element which has no necessary connection with Christian doctrine, especially the doctrine of the Incarnation, into Origen's interpretations. By identifying the instances where Origen is using Philonic interpretations, we will be able to identify aspects of Origen's exegesis which are non-Christian.

The fact that Origen uses non-Christian elements to interpret Scripture and discuss Christian doctrine is not unorthodox or even unusual. Unless Origen neglects to include specifically Christian concepts in his work, the in-

clusion of non-Christian concepts is not a flaw in his theological thought. Later on in this chapter, we will see that Origen does include specifically Christian, even specifically incarnational, aspects in his soteriology.

The second advantage of reading Philo to understand Origen is that Philo sometimes clearly and explicitly establishes positions which Origen implicitly assumes. We will see that Origen is so familiar with Philo's work that he assumes his audience possesses the same familiarity. Therefore, Origen feels free to leave logical gaps in his own writing when he thinks such gaps are adequately closed by Philo. This results in certain inconsistencies in Origen's interpretations of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7. An understanding of Philo resolves these inconsistencies into a more coherent form.

Finally, a comparison of the interpretations of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7 found in Origen and Philo will identify the instances where Origen departs from Philo's positions. Such a comparison, like the comparison of Origen and Clement attempted above, will highlight the unique aspects of Origen's interpretations of the creation of man stories. Even more importantly, Origen's adaptations of Philo may be the result of Origen's Christian perspective. By identifying these adaptations, we will be able to see the effect which Origen's belief in the Incarnation has upon his interpretations of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7, and the theo-

logical anthropology which he derives from these interpretations.

#### A. Origen's Use of Philonic Interpretations

As indicated above, Origen develops a great part of his Logos theology from his interpretations of Gen 1:26-27. Origen understands these verses to indicate that the Logos is the image of God to which man has been made similar. Philo has had a tremendous influence on Origen's interpretations of Gen 1:26-27, especially in regards to this identification of the Logos as the image of God.<sup>25</sup>

We have seen that in his first Homily on Genesis, Origen makes this identification in the context of explaining why Scripture records God saying "Let us make man according to our own image and likeness." Origen infers from this text that "likeness" and "image" are not synonyms; Scripture does not contain idle repetitions. So Origen identifies the "image of God" as the Logos; the "likeness" is the similarity to the Logos which God creates in man.

This exposition is very similar to the one found in Philo's De Opificio Mundi, 71. In this interpretation, Philo also identifies the "image of God" as the Logos, and claims that Moses added the term "likeness" to indicate the exact similarity to the Logos which is characteristic of man. Thus, Philo also interprets Gen 1:26-27 as indicating that man has been made as a precise imitation of the

Logos.26

The extent of verbal agreement is significant in this case. While it is theoretically possible that Origen may have reached the conclusion that the Logos is the image of God based on his reading of Paul's letter to the Colossians,<sup>27</sup> apart from Philo's influence, the pattern of Origen's argument is so similar to Philo's that some influence by Philo in this case must be acknowledged. At the very least, we may suppose that Origen uses a Philonic argument to support this identification. It is more likely that Origen finds the identification of the Logos as the image of God in Philo, and uses it in his own exegesis to draw Colossians and other Pauline texts into his interpretations of Gen 1:26-27.

In the course of adopting Philo's identification of the Logos as his own, Origen also adopts Philo's tendency to assert the significant difference between man and God which is implicit in this identification. Both Philo and Origen are careful to insist that the similarity between God and man is "at a third remove." Man is not really similar to God; man is similar to the Logos, who is similar to God.

The desire to assert and emphasize the distance between God and man lies behind the similarity of Origen's interpretation of Gen 1:26-27 found in Contra Celsum, and Philo's interpretation of these verses in Heres. 231.<sup>28</sup> In both interpretations, the identification of the Logos as the

image of God is followed by the conclusion that this is why Scripture asserts that man is made according to the image of God, not as an image of God. This interpretation of the preposition kata is sufficiently specific and idiosyncratic to infer that this is another case where Origen is explicitly adopting Philo's argument.<sup>29</sup>

In the following chapter of this thesis, we will need to remember that these two important concepts from Origen's interpretation of Gen 1:26-27--the identification of the Logos as the image of God, and the peculiar interpretation of the preposition kata which emphasizes the distance between God and man--are derived from a non-Christian source. If Origen's theological anthropology and consequent soteriology are related to his interpretations of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7, we should not be surprised if some aspects of Origen's anthropology and soteriology have a non-Christian character. The aspects of Origen's Logos theology discussed above are Philonic rather than Christian.

## B. Origen and Implicit Philonic Interpretations

As we have seen in the preceding section, Origen takes up some elements of Philo's interpretations of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7 with very little adaptation. There are also instances in Origen's exegesis where a Philonic interpretation has been influential, but is not explicitly included in Origen's exposition. Instead, Origen simply

includes the conclusions of Philo's interpretation without providing the logical connections which Philo makes in developing the interpretation. In such cases, Origen's interpretations seem inconsistent because the philosophical presuppositions which inform the interpretations are not made explicit. These presuppositions are often made explicit in Philo, so an understanding of Philo is essential to a proper understanding of Origen. Such instances are usually cases where Origen simply assumes that his audience is aware of the background of an idea and feels no need to elaborate. Origen would not see this assumption as an advance upon Philo's thought, nor as a distortion of Philo's work.

We have seen in the second chapter of this thesis that Origen alternates between describing the content of the similarity between God and man as being related to incorruptibility and immortality, and as being related to virtue. Philo exhibits this same tendency to shift from conceiving the similarity of man to God in terms of incorruptibility to terms of virtue. But Philo also indicates why this shift is justifiable. An examination of Philo's position helps clarify Origen's "inconsistency" when he identifies the characteristic which makes man like God as both immortality, and as the possession and exercise of virtue.

In Legum Allegoriae I, Philo argues that Scripture presents descriptions of the creation of two different men:

a "heavenly," ideal man in Gen 1:26-27, and an earthly man, who is part of the sensible world, in Gen 2:6-7.<sup>30</sup> In a detailed description of the creation of this second, earthly man, Philo points out that the mind of this man is also earthly, and therefore corruptible and mortal. Therefore, God breathes into the face of this man, granting a portion of divinity to him. Thus, God gives the earthly man the power of "true life." The mind of the earthly man becomes a soul endowed with true mind, and thus truly alive.<sup>31</sup> At this point, Philo associates the divine breath with immortality.

Later on in his exegesis, Philo addresses the question of why God gave the divine breath to the earthly, inferior man, and not to the heavenly, ideal man. God did not wish to create any soul which is devoid of virtue. If God had not granted a portion of divinity to the earthly man, his soul would be a soul without virtue. In addition to this, God wished to make obedience to his commands (i.e., virtuous behavior) a duty. God granted the "divine breath" to the earthly man to forestall the possibility of pleading ignorance as an excuse for disobedience. At this point in his exegesis, Philo identifies the "divine breath" with a concept or experience of virtue.<sup>32</sup>

Origen also tends to slide between the identification of virtue as the content of man's similarity to God, and the idea that man is like God inasmuch as man possesses



a soul or spirit that is incorruptible and immortal, just as God is incorruptible and immortal.<sup>33</sup> Origen varies between these two theories in different interpretations of Gen 1:26-27; Philo's shift occurs in a single interpretation which focuses on Gen 2:6-7. This fact makes it unlikely that Origen is simply adopting Philo's interpretation in this case. But it is likely that Origen is adopting Philo's "manner of speaking" about the similarity between God and man. Origen takes the idea that man is like God in terms of either immortality or virtue from Philo, and applies this idea to his own interpretation of Gen 1:26-27.

But Origen does not make an explicit link between the immortality of the soul or spirit, and the capacity of the soul or spirit to exercise virtue. In his interpretations of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7, Origen tends to stress one or the other, and this gives his interpretations the appearance of inconsistency in this regard. This shift in Origen's vocabulary is an indication that while Philo makes the link between virtue and immortality explicitly and deliberately, Origen simply assumes this link. The association of these two concepts along Platonic lines--the theory that the contemplation and practice of virtue is the essence of, or the necessary condition for, eternal life--is an established part of Origen's intellectual equipment. Origen will stress whichever concept, immortality or virtue, which best serves his purpose in a given context. When Origen

asserts that only man's spirit is made according to the image of God, immortality and incorruptibility are his primary concerns. When Origen discusses the degree of difference between God and man (and between the present man, and the future, perfect man), he focuses upon the concept of virtue. The link between virtue and immortality has become a ready assumption in Origen's mind, and does not need to be made explicit or defended. Philo does make this connection explicit, and thus we have an idea of how they are linked in Origen's theory as well.

A second example of Origen's tendency to include Philonic conclusions in his exegesis while omitting explicit support or explanation for these conclusions occurs when Origen discusses what aspect of man is similar to God. Philo consistently identifies this aspect as the mind (although some confusion between the terms "mind" and "soul" does appear in Philo).<sup>34</sup> Philo identifies man's mind as the aspect of man which is similar to God; therefore, man's rationality is a quality involved in the similarity of man to God. This fits in nicely with Philo's discussion of virtue as the content of the similarity between God and man. For Middle Platonists, the practice of virtue is practically reducible to acting according to reason.

But Origen does not speak of man's mind as the aspect of man which bears the image of God; he tends to use broader terms, such as man's spirit or soul or the "inner

man." By doing so, Origen derives two questions from what Philo has treated as a single issue. Origen separates the question of what aspect (the "inner man," the soul or the spirit) of man is similar to God from the question of how (through reason, virtue or immortality) man is similar to God. Of course, these two questions are closely related in Origen, but the relatively ambiguous terms which he uses to identify the divine aspect of man require that Origen be specific in identifying the quality or qualities which are common to God and man. In the course of making this clarification, Origen seldom refers to man's mind, or to rationality as the common ground between God and man.

Origen's comparative silence in regard to the divine nature of man's reason is not an indication that Origen has a more negative view of man's reason than Philo or Clement. When Origen identifies the "inner man," and not man's mind, as the bearer of the image of God, he is not questioning but rather assuming the rationality of the "inner man." This is clear from the rare occasions when Origen draws the subject of mind into his discussion of the divine aspect of man.

For example, in his Commentary on the Gospel of John, Origen attempts to clarify the relationship between God and the Logos, and man to the Logos, by presenting a proportion: man's reason is related to the Logos in the same way that the Logos is related to God. The introduction of the term "reason" in regard to man is abrupt in this

passage; up to this point in his argument, Origen has been discussing the Logos as the "divinity" which God bestows upon those men whom he wishes to make gods. But Origen wants to establish the connection between the reason in man (logos) and the Logos, the son of God.<sup>35</sup>

Here Origen identifies man's rationality as the aspect which is divine. His argument assumes this identification when he makes the abrupt shift from discussing the Logos as the divinity bestowed upon some men to discussing the relationship of reason to the Logos and the Logos to God. The shift is comprehensible when understood in the light of a Philonic understanding of the essential divinity of man's rationality.

Origen uses the term "reason" in this instance in much the same way that Philo uses the term "mind" (nous) in Legum Allegoriae.<sup>36</sup> Philo and Origen are referring to the "true mind," the exercise of reason according to heavenly or ideal principles. The rationality which contributes to simple existence, the exercise of the faculty which allows man to distinguish and judge between sensations and desires, is not the issue under discussion. Philo makes his peculiar usage of this term clear by contrasting it to the "mind" which is common to man and all animals; but Origen simply assumes that the peculiarity of his usage is apparent. Furthermore, in the rest of his interpretations of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7, Origen feels no need to speci-

fically affirm the peculiar rationality proper to the "inner man." The fact that the inner man acts rationally is so obvious to Origen that he feels no need to discuss it.

By reading Origen's interpretations of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7 from a Philonic perspective, the logical gaps in these interpretations are bridged. Origen assumes the rationality of the divine aspect of man, just as he assumes a logical connection between virtue and immortality. But since the rationale of these assumptions is not spelled out in Origen's expositions, his interpretations seem inconsistent at these points. Philo does indicate the rationale of identifying reason as the divine aspect of man, and of linking virtue to immortality. Origen assumes that his audience is sufficiently aware of Philo's work that there is no need to repeat Philo's entire argument. Therefore, such a familiarity with Philo's interpretations of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7 is essential for understanding Origen's interpretations of the same passages.

### C. Origen's Adaptations of Philonic Interpretations

We have seen that Origen sometimes uses concepts which are found in Philo, but without making the implications or sources of these concepts explicit. By reading Philo's more self-conscious use of these concepts, we come to discover the implicit assumptions of Origen's work. But there are also instances where Origen deliberately moves

beyond the positions found in Philo. These are cases where we can determine how Origen differs from Philo in his understanding of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7. The specific modification which Origen makes--the substitutions which he makes in arguing for the same point as Philo, the different conclusions which he draws using the same premises--may indicate the specific areas of disagreement between the assumptions of these two exegetes. We may be able to trace these specific disagreements to the difference between their understanding of humanity, which arises from their differing perspectives of the solution to the human problem.

For example, Origen does not follow Philo's argument in asserting that the whole man, man as a composite of spiritual and physical natures, is not the bearer of the similarity to God indicated by Gen 1:26-27. Both Philo and Origen make this assertion, but each exegete bases this assertion on different arguments, and uses it for different purposes.

When Philo insists that the composite man is not the bearer of God's image, he is drawing a sharp distinction between the man created in Gen 1:26-27 and the man created in Gen 2:6-7. The first story describes the creation of a heavenly man created according to the image of God. The second story describes an earthly man who is composed of two distinct natures: body and soul. this earthly man is described as a mixture, a composite being.<sup>37</sup> Since he is a

composite being, the earthly man is in need of instruction.<sup>38</sup> The heavenly man is the "true man," created according to God's image, and such a man needs no instruction, nor does he have any share in corruptible substances.<sup>39</sup>

Philo uses this assertion in different contexts. Sometimes he insists on an ontological difference between the heavenly man of Gen 1:26-27 and the earthly man of Gen 2:6-7. Other times, Philo argues for the superiority and independence of man's rational aspect, using this assertion as the basis of his argument. But in every case, Philo uses the assertion that the composite man is not made according to God's likeness to make a philosophical observation concerning human nature. These anthropological assertions are supported by Philo's interpretation of Scripture, but they do not refer to, or rely upon, Philo's concept of God. Therefore, these anthropological assertions are not theological.

Origen also insists that the composite nature of man does not possess any essential similarity to God. Origen's argument differs from Philo's, however, in that Origen consistently refers to the simple nature of God as the basis for his assertion. God is entirely simple; we cannot speak of God as having parts, especially hierarchically related parts. Since God is simple, whatever is made according to God's image must be simple. Therefore, man as a composite creature cannot bear God's image.<sup>40</sup>

Origen's argument is essentially theological. Origen uses a theological axiom--an axiom concerning the nature of God--to make an anthropological assertion. In this instance, Origen's line of argumentation differs significantly from Philo's.

Origen sometimes departs from Philo's exegetical technique as well as his argumentative technique. Such departures indicate fundamental differences in Origen's and Philo's interpretations. For instance, Philo usually interprets Gen 1:26-27 in conjunction with Gen 2:6-7, often contrasting the two different men created in these passages. But Origen seldom links these two stories together, even for the purpose of contrast. Furthermore, although Philo has a tendency to emphasize the importance of the first creation story over the second,<sup>41</sup> he still discusses the second creation story at great length. Origen emphasizes the first creation story to such an extent that he tends to treat the second creation story very briefly. References to Gen 2:6-7 occur much less frequently in Origen's work than references to Gen 1:26-27. Origen follows Philo's example in this regard, but carries his emphasis of Gen 1:26-27 to a greater extreme.

The reason why Origen is more willing than Philo to simply pass over the second creation story is that these two authors have significantly different opinions regarding the actual subjects of these stories. Although Philo relies



upon and communicates a varied tradition of interpretation in his exegesis of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7, he himself insists that these two stories describe the creation of two different men.<sup>42</sup> The heavenly or ideal man is created in Gen 1:26-27, and is identified as a member of the intelligible realm. The earthly man, repeatedly described as being of a mixed nature, is created in Gen 2:6-7. This latter man is the first human being. Philo discusses both in his effort to derive a proper understanding of man, and a proper moral regimen for the individual man, from Scripture.

In the course of his various interpretations of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7, however, Philo also includes explanations in which the two creation stories are conflated; he then proceeds to pry them apart. Origen has been influenced by these conflated interpretations as well as by Philo's explicit inclination to separate the two stories. As a result, Origen does not think that these creation stories depict the origins of two different men, but rather the origins of two distinct aspects of man, which currently co-exist but which have been created separately, and are destined to be separated.

Origen makes this position clear the Prologue to his Commentary on the Song of Songs.<sup>43</sup> Here, Origen starts to assert that Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7 describes the creation of two different men, but then adduces a passage from Paul to point out that these two "men" are found in every man.

Origen interprets Scripture as showing that the two aspects of human existence which these two "men" represent are distinct, and destined to be separated. But he also understands both creation stories to refer to man as he presently exists. Thus, Origen can accept interpretations where the two creation stories appear to be conflated, since he understands both stories to refer to the creation of man. But Origen insists on treating the two stories separately, because he wishes to emphasize the difference between the spiritual aspect of man, whose creation is described in Gen 1:26-27, and the physical aspect of man, which is created in Gen 2:6-7.

In making this argument, Origen insists that the two creation of man stories in Genesis describe the creation of two different aspects of man--figuratively, two different "men." He refuses to give credence to the idea that the two stories refer to the same event.<sup>44</sup> This point is essential to Origen's position, because this interpretation of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7 occurs within the context of his Commentary on the Song of Songs.

The premise of this commentary is that the Song of Songs uses corporeal images to explore spiritual truths. This is a legitimate technique, in spite of the provocative imagery used in the Song of Songs, because the inner and the outer man are distinct from each other, but similar enough that a common vocabulary may be applied to both.<sup>45</sup> If Gen

1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7 describes the creation of only one man, than there is no distinction and no similarity. If this is the case, the Song of Songs, with its lush corporeal imagery, cannot be considered a wholesome, much less inspired, book. The argument that the Song of Songs can communicate spiritual truths through this imagery is eliminated. So Origen must assert the existence of two distinct but similar aspects of man in order to interpret the Song of Songs allegorically.

While Origen and Philo agree in emphasizing the importance of Gen 1:26-27 over Gen 2:6-7, some of the basic assumptions which underlie their interpretations are different. Origen understands these two stories as referring to the creation of two aspects of man; Philo understands the stories as describing the creation of two different men. This difference has repercussions in many of the instances where Origen adopts Philo's exegetical vocabulary and techniques. Both exegetes tend to contrast the earthly man with the spiritual man, the man described in Gen 1:26-27 with the one described in Gen 2:6-7. In making this contrast, both tend to employ a tripartite anthropology, which is fundamentally dualistic. The three aspects of the human nature which both exegetes assume are separated into two categories: the earthly and the spiritual. But there are significant differences in the anthropologies which Origen and Philo adopt in their interpretations.

Philo tends to describe the three aspects of man's nature in terms from Plato's Timaeus. Man consists of three parts: the rational soul, the sensate soul, and the body and its organs of sensation.<sup>46</sup> Philo's interpretations of Gen 2:6-7 emphasizes the distinction between the rational soul, which is of divine origin, and the sensate soul, which man shares with the beasts and which is a part of the earthly man's carnal existence. In effect, Philo assumes that the spiritual aspect of man is simply unitary--it consists only of the divine element in man, reason.<sup>47</sup>

Origen also employs a tripartite anthropology, which makes a dualistic distinction between the spiritual and carnal aspects of man's existence. But Origen's system distinguishes between the spirit and soul and body. Both man's spirit and soul are parts of the higher, spiritual aspect of human existence; only the body and its sensations and desires are part of the carnal aspect of man's existence. The animating principle of man, the soul, is treated with some ambiguity. Sometimes the soul is identified as the divine aspect within man; other times, it is distinguished from the truly divine aspect of man, the spirit. But in such cases, the soul is destined to cling to the spirit and become truly spiritual--and truly divine--itself.<sup>48</sup> So for Origen, the spiritual aspect of man has two parts, the spirit and the soul, and the carnal aspect is unitary.

This difference between Philo and Origen is related to their different perspectives of the "earthly" man, man as he currently exists.<sup>49</sup> Philo interprets Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7 with the intention of discerning how the heavenly aspect of man comes to exist in a mortal creature, and his interpretations tend to focus on how the earthly man can be as much like the ideal man as possible.<sup>50</sup> But the primary use of his interpretations of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7 is to show how the creation stories may be interpreted as stories about the individual human soul. In doing this, Philo emphasizes these stories as sources of information regarding what the soul is.<sup>51</sup> Philo interprets these stories in order to establish an anthropological theory upon which a moral regimen may be based.

Origen thinks the two creation of man stories refer to two aspects of man as he currently exists. In interpreting Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7 in this fashion, Origen (like Philo) is primarily concerned with discovering how Scripture relates to the individual's situation. But for Origen, this process involves describing how the spiritual aspect may be nurtured and emphasized, since this is the immortal and divine aspect of man's existence. Origen interprets these two stories in order to describe how the earthly man may become completely heavenly. His emphasis is more on the moral regimen which is implicit in the creation of man stories, than on directly describing the nature of

the soul as he finds it in Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7.

Origen's insistence that the two creation of man stories describe the creation of two different aspects of man, not the creation of two different men, is the primary area where Origen departs from Philo's exegesis of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7. Nevertheless, Origen may be drawing upon Philo in making this assertion. At various points in his interpretations of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7, Philo talks about the two different men as though they are types of men found in the world.<sup>52</sup>

Origen justifies his exegetical theory by supposing that there are three types of men found in the world. But we have seen how these three types of men are distinguished from each other on the basis of what part of their human psyche predominates in them.<sup>53</sup> For Origen, it is a short step from discussing types of men to discussing aspects of men, which are the source for distinguishing such classifications. This shift may occur in Origen's reading of Philo. Origen reads Philo's assertion that Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7 describes the creation of two different men, and agrees--but in the sense that these two men are paradigms of men who are characterized by one or the other aspect of man's existence.

### III. Conclusion

From this analysis of the influence which Clement of

Alexandria and Philo of Alexandria have had on Origen's interpretations of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7, we have obtained a clearer understanding of these interpretations. Origen's interpretations of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7 differ from Clement's, and these differences highlight three aspects of Origen's understanding of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7. First, Origen draws a sharp contrast between the condition of man as he currently exists, and man as he will exist in his perfected state. Secondly, Origen's soteriology places a special emphasis on the re-establishment of man's original similarity to the Logos. Finally, Origen acknowledges a scriptural description of man's corporeal aspect, and thus puts himself in the position of needing to deal with this aspect. These three conclusions will be important to the exploration of Origen's theological anthropology and soteriology in the next chapter of this thesis.

Our examination of Philo's influence on Origen's interpretations of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7 has been even more fruitful in terms of providing information about Origen's theological anthropology and soteriology. We have seen that Origen's Logos theology comes from his adoption of certain Philonic interpretations of Gen 1:26-28; therefore we must anticipate a non-Christian element in Origen's Logos theology. We have also seen that Origen's odd shifts between identifying virtue and immortality as the content of the similarity between God and man are based upon a Philonic

perspective which relates virtue and immortality. Furthermore, Origen's understanding of the essential divinity of man's reason has been emphasized and clarified.

The analysis of the instances where Origen departs from Philo's interpretations of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7 has also provided valuable information. We have seen that Origen makes an effort to construct an explicitly theological anthropology--an anthropology which is based on concepts of God and man's relationship to God. Origen also differs from Philo by insisting on an ontological relationship between the inner, spiritual man described in Gen 1:26-28 and the outer, corporeal man described in Gen 2:6-7. For Origen, this relationship is not that of an archetype to an image; both "men" are aspects of each human individual. Furthermore, while these aspects are distinct, they are sufficiently alike that knowledge of one can be applied, with modifications, to the other. Therefore, Origen is able to find spiritual significance in the corporeal aspect of man.

Finally, we have seen that Origen's tripartite anthropology, developed in the context of interpreting Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7, is different from Philo's. Origen thinks man's spiritual aspect consists of two parts, a soul and a spirit. This concept is not Philonic. When Philo distinguishes man's rational soul from man's sensate soul, the latter is clearly a part of man's corporeal aspect.



Origen's tripartite anthropology seems to be his own invention.

Equipped with these conclusions, and the analysis of Origen's interpretations in chapter 2 of this thesis, we are prepared to explore Origen's theological anthropology and correlative soteriology as they are developed in relation to Origen's understanding of Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:6-7.

## CHAPTER IV

### ORIGEN'S THEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND INCARNATIONAL THEOLOGY

Studies of Origen's theology tend to focus on the theories which Origen proposes in his writings, and the philosophical presuppositions which produce these theories. But Origen usually proposes these theories within the context of interpreting Scripture. Origen's theological speculation occurs within the context of Biblical interpretation; his interpretation of specific passages of Scripture leads to specific theological theories. We can best understand Origen's theoretical proposals through an examination of the scriptural interpretations which give rise to these proposals.

This thesis is an examination of Origen's interpretations of Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9 for the purposes of illuminating Origen's theological anthropology, incarnational theology and soteriology. Because only these passages are under consideration, only the aspects of Origen's theology which arise in connection with these passages will be discussed. While his theological anthropology greatly depends on his interpretations of Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9, Origen develops his incarnational theology and soteriology through the interpretation of many different texts. Therefore, many aspects of Origen's incarnational theology and

soteriology will be neglected in this chapter. The conclusions of this chapter are only a partial contribution to the study of Origen's understanding of the saving work of the incarnate Logos.

This chapter will begin with a summary of Origen's theological anthropology as he develops it in relation to his interpretations of Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9. We will pay close attention to the specific problem which Origen sees as man's principal affliction, and the general solution which this problem entails.

Due to Origen's insistence that "the end be like the beginning,"<sup>1</sup> the next step will be analysis of Origen's understanding of man's original condition, especially man's original relationship to the Logos. Since Origen thinks that man's original condition will be his final condition, this analysis will provide us with an understanding of what the saving work of Christ, the incarnate Logos, is to accomplish. Of course, since Origen believes that man's original condition was purely spiritual, without any corporeal aspect, this analysis will focus on the relationship of man as a pure spirit to the unincarnate Logos.

Finally, we shall examine the specific solution which Origen juxtaposes to the human problem: the salvific work of Christ, the incarnate Logos. This examination will focus on the specific contribution of the Incarnation of the Logos to the salvation of man, as Origen describes it in his

interpretations of Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9. Origen interprets these passages in such a way that they not only refer to the problem inherent in the current human condition, but they also contain implicit or explicit indications of the saving work of Christ.

#### I. Origen's Theological Anthropology: The Flaw in Man's Existence

The key concepts of Origen's general understanding of man's fall are the pre-existence of souls, the punitive or remedial character of corporeality, and the soul's destined return to its original state. All of these concepts are involved, explicitly or implicitly, in Origen's interpretations of Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9 which we examined in Chapter 2 of this thesis. Now we shall attempt to assemble these individual concepts into an organized theological anthropology. Such an anthropology is often best expressed through a narrative, rather than theoretically.

Origen's "myth" of the fall, is the story through which he conveys his understanding of the problem with mankind in general. Origen's theological anthropology is based on his conviction that originally, human souls were not souls at all. What we now call human souls were originally created as pure spirits, pure intellects.<sup>2</sup> They were part of the intellectual realm. These pure spirits were created without bodies, and were therefore intended to be incorruptible. Anything which exists without a body is not naturally

liable to corruption.<sup>3</sup> But these pure spirits were created with free will and, by the disobedient exercise of the will, these spirits "fell away" from their original relationship with God.<sup>4</sup> This "falling away" occurred through a defect in the love the created spirits came to have for God. As a result of their failure to love God, these pure spirits became different spiritual entities. The kind of spiritual entity which they became depended on the degree to which they failed to love God.<sup>5</sup>

One group of spirits failed by loving God in an "intermediate" fashion--they did not lose their love for God altogether, but this love was "cooled." These spirits became the spiritual entities which we now call human souls.<sup>6</sup>

These souls are peculiar creatures. On the one hand, as we have seen from our examination of Origen's interpretations of Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9, these souls are spiritual. They are linked (or, at least, they should be linked) to the spirit--the entity which the soul itself once was. Origen seems to think that this entity still exists as man's intellect, the highest faculty of man's soul.<sup>7</sup> But because the intellect exists in the soul as only one faculty, rather than as an entity in its own right, its existence is impaired.

On the other hand, souls are destined to be joined with corporeal bodies, and even before they are embodied, they have "carnal desires."<sup>8</sup> These desires, and the union

of souls with corporeal bodies, are meant to help souls return to their original, purely spiritual state.<sup>9</sup> But a soul may misuse its embodiment, and regress in its efforts to return to the spiritual state.<sup>10</sup>

An often neglected but central aspect of this description of the soul is the flawed spiritual nature of the soul. The soul exists as a "fallen" spirit. The immediate consequence of this fall is a degradation in the spiritual order: a spirit becomes a soul. This soul is spiritual and retains some contact with its original condition. But the soul is a flawed creature; it exists only because a spirit freely chose to love God defectively.

Origen discusses the "fall" of the pure spirit, and its consequent existence as a soul, by referring to Gen 1:26-27. The spirit was made according to the image of God. When the spirit falls and becomes a soul, this similarity to God remains, although it may be obscured.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, Origen is able to say that the human soul is made according to the image of God, in regards to its highest faculty, reason. But the soul is not yet made in the likeness of God; this greater similarity to God is part of the soul's return to its original spiritual state.<sup>12</sup> Before it can undertake the quest for this greater similarity, the soul must regain the clear "image of God" which it had before it fell and became a soul. It must remove the defacing "images" which hide the image of God. These "images" are

the result of the soul becoming entangled in the body and its carnal desires, which were intended to help the soul become a spirit again. Thus, before the soul can progress in its return to complete spirituality, it must purify itself from the body and its desires--even though God has given these to the soul in order to help the soul become a spirit.

The incarnation of the soul is part of the spirit's punishment for making the choice to love God insufficiently. But this punishment is fundamentally remedial. God intends the union of the human soul to a human body to help the soul regain its original spiritual status. Origen does not think man's corporeal existence as such is part of the problem of man's existence; the embodiment of the human soul is part of God's solution to the human problem.<sup>13</sup>

Origen proposes a soteriology in which a flawed spiritual creature (the soul) requires the assistance of a lower type of existence (union with a corporeal body) in order to regain a higher state of existence (the soul's original spiritual existence). The soul is a spiritual entity, but it cannot regain its pure spiritual existence unless it is united with a body--which is much less spiritual than the soul itself. The soul cannot simply "turn itself around" and return to its purely spiritual status. The soul must be joined to a body and "ricochet" from corporeal existence back to a purely spiritual existence.

If we recall the Platonic idea that the rational soul is subject to forgetfulness when it becomes embodied, we may be able to understand Origen's argument better. This idea is similar, but not identical, to Origen's understanding of the condition of the soul. For Origen, the soul forgets its true nature in the process of becoming a soul. In its failure to love God appropriately, a pure spirit loses its sense of itself and becomes a soul. This soul cannot comprehend the spiritual realm directly, even though it is a spiritual entity. God joins this soul to a body so that the soul can regain its original condition. The body, and the entire corporeal creation, is similar to the spiritual realm. The soul is able to comprehend the physical realm, and so the body and the entire physical universe is able to remind the soul of the spiritual realm. The body is able to remind the soul of its original spiritual existence, and thus help the soul recover its original condition.

Origen does not speak in terms of reminding the soul of what it has forgotten. He describes the recovery process in terms of re-establishing the "image of God," the similarity man has to God through being similar to the Logos, within the soul. When this similarity is re-established, the soul will be a pure spirit once again.<sup>14</sup> But even though the soul must be embodied to become a pure spirit once again, the body must be left behind when the soul reaches this goal. Pure spirits do not have a corporeal dimen-



sion.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, even though the embodiment of the human soul is the first step in the rehabilitation of the soul, a time will come when the soul must reject the body in order to continue on its return to its original state as a pure spirit or intellect. At some point, therefore, man's redemption must involve a rejection of the corporeal dimension.<sup>16</sup> But the soul may be reluctant to reject the corporeal dimension. As we indicated earlier, the soul's carnal desires, which were supposed to assist the soul's efforts to return to the spiritual state, may entangle the soul with the body. The soul may misuse its embodied existence, and thus experience the body as a hindrance to its return to the spiritual realm. By being entangled with a body, the soul becomes less and less aware of its true spiritual nature. This misuse of the body makes it more difficult for the soul to reject the body. The body becomes an impediment to the soul, even though it was given to the soul as a help. The body becomes a detriment when the soul fails to use it properly. Once again, the fault lies with the soul, not with the body itself.

The problem which Origen perceives in the current human condition, then, is not that the soul has been joined with a body. Instead, the inherent problem in man's existence is that a purely spiritual entity has become a flawed spiritual entity--a soul. This flawed spiritual entity can

either improve its condition, by re-establishing its original similarity to (and love for) God, or it can deteriorate still further by continued disobedience to God. This deterioration does not involve a further degradation in the spiritual status of the soul: the soul remains a soul. But it does further diminish the spiritual quality of the soul. The soul becomes less aware and less responsive to its highest faculty, the mind or spirit.<sup>17</sup> The soul further defaces the "image of God" which it still possesses.

Origen perceives the return of the soul to its original state as the solution to this problem within human existence. Using terms derived from his interpretations of Gen 1:26-27, Origen describes this return as having two steps. The first step is the re-establishment of the image of God within the soul. This image has never been completely lost, but it has been obscured or defaced. The first step is to remove the defacement, the "images" drawn over the image of God in the soul. The second step is the soul's gradual acquisition of the likeness of God, which is a more perfect similarity to God than is implied by "the image of God."<sup>18</sup>

Because the original spiritual creation had a close relationship with the Logos, the rehabilitation of the soul and its return to its original state depend on the activity of the Logos. Origen describes both steps in the transformation of the soul back into a spirit as occurring

through the agency of the Logos.<sup>19</sup> But Origen describes the saving activity of the Logos in connection with the original relationship of the Logos as pure spirits. Salvation involves the recovery of this relationship. Before we discuss the activity of the Logos in saving man, we must examine the goal of this activity: the recovery of the original relationship between man's spirit and the Logos.

## II. Man and the Unincarnate Logos

From our analysis of Origen's interpretations of Gen 1:26-27, we are acquainted with Origen's understanding of the Logos as a mediator between God and man. This understanding emphasizes the distance between God and man. Following Philo, Origen insists that man has not been made as an image of God, but according to the image of God.<sup>20</sup> This interpretation of Gen 1:26-27 indicates that the similarity between God and man is not immediate, but only derivative. Man himself is not like God himself; man is like the image of God, the Logos. Of course, since the image of God is like God, man does possess some similarity to God. But man is at a third remove from God, with the image of God, the Logos, between God and man.

This position has often been attributed to Origen's Middle Platonic perspective.<sup>21</sup> The distance between the transcendent, unitary God and the multiplicity of creatures is an essential doctrine for this philosophical perspective.

Origen, as a Middle Platonist, would be obliged to stress the distance between the One and the many.

But this interpretation of Gen 1:26-27 is not the result of Origen's attempt to force Scripture into agreement with his own philosophical perspective.<sup>22</sup> On the contrary, Origen stresses the distance between God and man for theological reasons.<sup>23</sup> In Contra Celsum, these reasons are primarily apologetic. Origen must refute Celsus' accusation that Christians have an unworthy concept of God since they believe that man is "just like" God, and man is manifestly wicked. Origen does not attempt to argue that man is sufficiently good to merit comparison with God. Instead, he argues that Celsus has misunderstood Scripture and the Christian position. Christians do not believe that man, as he currently exists, is just like God. Christians believe that man has been created according to the image of God, and therefore man bears a more distant similarity to God.<sup>24</sup>

Origen emphasizes the distance between God and man for other reasons than that of refuting the accusation that Christians have an unworthy concept of God. In his other writings, Origen interprets Gen 1:26-27 to stress this distance in order to set the stage for his understanding of the saving work of the Logos.<sup>25</sup> In order to discern this soteriological element, we must recall Origen's understanding of Scripture as a whole. We must also read these interpretations in the light of Origen's distinction between

the image of God and the likeness of God.

As we have seen in the first chapter of this thesis, Origen thinks Scripture has been given to fallen man for his salvation. Scripture is given to man in order to lead man back to God. Therefore, when Scripture describes man's creation, it is addressing fallen man. Is it possible that Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9 is actually a description of the "creation" of fallen man? This seems to be the case. Origen interprets Scripture as describing the creation of two aspects of man. This is why there are two descriptions of the creation of man. But Origen's understanding of man's original condition as a pure spirit cannot allow for distinct aspects within the original man: pure spirits cannot have such aspects. Therefore, when Scripture asserts that man has both spiritual and corporeal aspects, Scripture must be describing man as he currently exists.

When Gen 1:26-27 describes the creation of man's spiritual aspect, Scripture indicates that this aspect includes a remnant of man's previous existence as a pure spirit. But the man described in both creation stories is man as he currently exists. Therefore, when Origen insists that the man (or the aspect of man) created in Gen 1:26-30 is related to God in a derivative fashion, he is talking about man as he currently exists.

When we recall Origen's interpretations of Gen 1:26-27 which emphasize the distinction between the similarity to

God implied by the "image of God" and the "likeness of God" as a greater similarity to God which man must achieve, we can see the soteriological element implicit in the interpretations which emphasize the distance between God and man by placing the Logos as intermediary between them. The man who is so distant from God is man as he currently exists. The perfected man will not only be more similar to the image of God (the Logos), he will also possess an actual likeness to God. The perfected man will have a relationship with God much like the relationship between the Logos and God.<sup>26</sup> By emphasizing the distance between man as he currently exists and God, Origen emphasizes the difference between man as he currently exists (fallen man) and man in his perfected condition (redeemed man).

This is why Origen insists the Logos is a necessary intermediary between fallen man and God. When man is perfected, his relationship with God will correspond to the relationship of the Logos to God.<sup>27</sup> Since man's perfection is simply a return to man's original condition, man's original creation--not the creation recounted in Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9, which describes the "creation" of fallen man--was as a pure spirit intimately related to God. Thus man's perfection consists of re-establishing this relationship.

The soteriological element of Origen's concept of the Logos as intermediary between God and man consists of

this insistence that fallen man must have his original similarity with the Logos re-established. The original similarity between "man"--i.e., the spiritual entity which became a human soul--and the Logos existed because the Logos was the agent and model for the creation of the spiritual realm.<sup>28</sup> But even though the purely spiritual realm is intimately related to the Logos, the agent and model of its creation, it is also intimately related to God the Father. In fact, because of its relationship with the Logos, the spiritual realm is related to God in a way which corresponds to the relationship of the Logos and God. Thus, the spiritual realm does not relate to God through the Logos so much as it relates to God in the same way as the Logos.<sup>29</sup> The Logos functions as an intermediary in reference to fallen spirits (e.g., human souls). In reference to the pure spiritual realm, Origen de-emphasizes the role of Logos as intermediary in favor of stressing the similarity between the Logos and pure spirits.

The similarity between the Logos and pure spirits exists due to the role of the Logos in the creation of the spiritual realm. This has been observed by various critics of Origen as a defective element in Origen's christology and soteriology.<sup>30</sup> The most intimate relationship with the Logos exists on a strictly spiritual plane, apart from the Incarnation of the Logos. This appears to imply that Origen does not consider the Incarnation to be a central element in

the relationship between God, the Logos and man.

But it is important to note that the relationship of the Logos to spirits refers to the original spiritual realm --and therefore does not directly refer to "man" at all. This relationship does not exist between the Logos and the human soul, because the human soul is no longer a purely spiritual entity. In the original spiritual realm, there was no "spirit of man" distinguishable from other spirits. Diversity among spirits is the result of the disobedience of spirits, some of whom disobeyed in such a way that they became human souls and later embodied human souls.<sup>31</sup> Thus, the relationship between the Logos and pure spirits does not directly apply to man, since the distinct creature "man" does not exist in the purely spiritual realm. A remnant of this relationship between the Logos and spirits exists between man and the Logos since man's rational and spiritual aspect is a remnant of his original, purely spiritual state. When man has been returned to his original state, he will once again share in this relationship of similarity to the Logos--but at this point, man will no longer be human. He will once again be a pure spirit. The unincarnate Logos is intimately related to such spirits. But since man is not a pure spirit, we cannot assert the existence of such a relationship between man and the unincarnate Logos.

We have seen that while some similarity between man and the unincarnate Logos exists, man's salvation depends



upon the complete re-establishment of this similarity. Origen's thinks that only the incarnate Logos is able to re-establish the similarity between himself and man, and therefore the Incarnation is a key aspect of Origen's soteriology.

### III. The Incarnate Logos

As we mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, Origen's understanding of the role played by the incarnate Logos has been discussed by scholars from various perspectives. These various perspectives have produced a variety of models for the soteriological aspect of Origen's incarnational theology. Many scholars believe that Origen's soteriology is primarily didactic, and attribute this to the influence of Clement of Alexandria.<sup>32</sup> Others claim that the model of Christ vanquishing the powers of evil and freeing man from Satan predominates in Origen's soteriology.<sup>33</sup> Still others point to Origen's understanding of the Logos as an intermediary between the unity of God and the multiplicity of creatures, and insist that Origen's concept of the Logos as possessing different manifestations (epinoiai) is the key to Origen's soteriology.<sup>34</sup>

Danielou attempts to organize all of these elements into a soteriological system.<sup>35</sup> He argues that Origen believes Christ, the incarnate Logos, defeats Satan and frees man, and then proceeds to teach man how to use his freedom

to turn to God. Christ is uniquely able to instruct man, because Christ is able to adapt himself to the capacities of each individual. This adaptability exists in Christ by means of the various manifestations which exist in Christ. Danielou's system includes the various elements of Origen's soteriology which appear in Origen's writings, but neglects the scriptural interpretations which produce and nuance these elements. In addition, the role played by the Incarnation in the salvation of man receives scant attention.

Danielou is not the only author to downplay the role of the Incarnation in Origen's soteriology. Almost the only point where the secondary literature agrees about Origen's soteriology is in pointing out that the Incarnation does not play a central role in Origen's theological reflection on man's salvation.<sup>36</sup> No one denies Origen's belief in the Incarnation; scholars agree that Origen believes in the historicity of the Incarnation, and gives it some role in his soteriological writings. But most scholars think Origen fails to explore the soteriological significance of the Incarnation to any great extent. The agreed upon conclusion is that Origen tends to stress the role of the unincarnate Logos to the neglect of the Incarnation, although scholars disagree about why this is the case.<sup>37</sup>

Our examination of Origen's interpretations of Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9 does not resolve the confusion which exists concerning Origen's soteriology, but it does place

Origen's understanding of the soteriological significance of the Incarnation in a different light. The role of the Incarnation in the salvation of man is emphasized and described, explicitly or implicitly, in many of Origen's interpretations of Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9.

Origen's first Homily on Genesis has been the keystone of our examination of these interpretations. In this homily, Origen uses Gen 1:26-27 to comment on the saving work of the Logos. The problem inherent in man's current existence is that man has "drawn over" or defaced the similarity to the Logos which exists in his spiritual nature. This similarity must be re-established. The Logos accomplishes this by becoming man. In his first Homily on Genesis, Origen explicitly shows the Incarnation to be a key aspect in the redemption of man.<sup>38</sup>

The description of the salvific effect of the Incarnation is less clear in this passage than the assertion that the Incarnation is salvifically effective. Since the Logos became man, all who come to the incarnate Logos are made similar to him in proportion to their ability. Because the Logos became man, everyone who comes to him is made like the incarnate Logos. This establishes a new similarity between man and the Logos. Originally, spirits (who later became human souls) were like the unincarnate Logos. Now, man (an embodied soul) is made similar to the incarnate Logos. Through this new similarity, man will be able to

regain his original similarity to the Logos.

Origen implies that man is able to move from this new similarity with the incarnate Logos back to his original similarity with the unincarnate Logos by contemplating the incarnate Logos. When the Logos became man, the body and soul of the Logos became divinized, i.e., made spiritual.<sup>39</sup> Man is lead to a participation in the spiritual nature of the Logos by contemplating the divinized, incarnate nature of the Logos. Thus man can regain his own original spiritual form, i.e., his original form as a spirit similar to the unincarnate Logos.

The key to Origen's soteriology in connection with his interpretations of Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9 is his insistence on the need for establishing a new similarity between man and the Logos before the old similarity can be regained. The soul is unable to retrace its steps; it cannot return directly to its original similarity to the Logos. The soul has defaced its similarity to the image of God to such an extent that the soul cannot recognize this image within itself. A new similarity between the soul and the image of God is necessary before the soul can perceive and renew the old similarity with the Logos. The Incarnation of the Logos establishes this new similarity.<sup>40</sup>

In order to establish the new similarity between man and the Logos, the Logos must truly become man. For Origen, this means that Jesus Christ must have a spirit, soul and

body as all men do.<sup>41</sup> In the case of the Incarnation, Origen's tripartite anthropology leads him into difficulty. Origen understands man's soul to be a fallen and flawed spiritual entity. Man's spirit, the highest faculty of man's soul, is the remnant of the pure spiritual entity which the soul once was. The body is God's provision for the soul to lead it back to its spiritual nature. But the Logos is not the same thing as a pure spirit, even though pure spirits are like the Logos. Nor is the Logos such a thing as can "fall," become a soul and thus require a body to become purely spiritual again.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, Origen posits the existence of a particular spirit which did not fall when the rest of the spiritual realm fell (and became human souls or demons or whatever). This spirit was so attached to the Logos as to become one with the Logos. This spirit voluntarily became a soul and united with a body in order to accomplish the salvation of man.<sup>43</sup>

The crucial issue in this theory of the Incarnation is the union of the Logos with the spirit which is to become the soul of Jesus Christ. The concept of this union makes Origen's incarnational theology somewhat clumsy, because there are four aspects of Jesus rather than three: the Logos, the spirit which is united with the Logos, the soul of Christ (which has the spirit united with the Logos as its highest faculty), and the body of Christ.<sup>44</sup>

The concept of a spirit united with the Logos seems

superfluous as well as awkward. If a pure spirit can voluntarily accept degradation to the status of a soul,<sup>45</sup> why can't the Logos, who is so similar to such spirits, do the same? This would eliminate the extra term in Origen's christological anthropology. Christ would be an embodied soul, like all mankind, but the highest faculty in this soul would be the Logos.

Origen does seem to adopt this simpler incarnational theology on some occasions.<sup>46</sup> But for the most part, he insists on the awkward inclusion of a distinct spirit which unites with the Logos. Apparently, Origen does not think that the similarity between pure spirits and the Logos is so great as to allow the Logos himself to be changed into a lower spiritual entity, the way pure spirits are changed when they become souls. Because Origen insists on this distinction between pure spirits and the Logos, in spite of his assertion that spirits are similar to the Logos, Origen's incarnational theology is awkward.<sup>47</sup> Even when he speaks about the original relationship between created spirits and the Logos, Origen is careful to distinguish between the divine and non-divine spheres of existence. When he discusses the relationship between souls and the Logos, this distinction is so important that Origen allows it to strain his incarnational theology.

This theory of the Incarnation would not only be simpler than the one which Origen usually proposes, it would

be more convincing in regard to the Logos actually becoming man. As it stands, Origen's incarnational theology depends upon an intimate union of a spirit and the Logos. Unless these two are actually united, the Logos cannot be understood as truly becoming man. Instead, a spirit who is closely connected with the Logos voluntarily becomes an embodied soul; no Incarnation of the Logos himself occurs. But Origen's soteriology requires the actual Incarnation of the Logos. Therefore, Origen insists on an actual union of a particular spirit and the Logos, and the subsequent voluntary degradation of that spirit to an impaired spiritual existence as a soul.

#### IV. Conclusion

The Incarnation is a crucial element in Origen's soteriology because of his understanding of man's fallen condition. The fall caused a pure spirit to become an impaired spiritual entity, a soul. A soul needs to be embodied in order to be saved (i.e., to become a pure spirit again), because a soul cannot comprehend its original existence as a pure spirit. It needs to learn of the spiritual realm through a metaphor or simile. The body and the entire physical world acts as a metaphor of the spiritual order. The physical world is able to do this because it is similar to the spiritual order; because the body is less than the soul, the soul can comprehend the body, and so the metaphor

is available to the soul.

But a soul is likely to misuse its embodied condition for the same reason that it needs to be embodied: the soul has lost its ability to perceive its highest faculty--the spirit or reason--as its true self. Because it does not know its true nature, the soul may regard its current embodied condition as its true nature. When this happens, the soul becomes less and less aware of its original existence, its original relationship with God, and its original similarity to the Logos.

In order to save this confused creature, the Logos becomes like the soul in its present condition. The Logos becomes incarnate. Since the incarnate Logos, Christ, is like the embodied soul, Christ is able to reveal to the soul its true spiritual character, and show the soul how to regain this character. Christ illuminates the metaphor of corporeal existence for the soul, and points out to the soul the similarity between the physical realm and the spiritual realm. Christ is able to do this by revealing the divine, spiritual aspect of his own embodied condition. Since the embodied soul is similar to the embodied Christ, this similarity enables the soul to perceive the spiritual, semi-divine aspect of its own condition. This perception is the first step towards the salvation of the soul.

For the soul to be saved, however, it must regain its original condition, its original similarity to the



Logos, and its original relationship to God. The teaching and example of Christ, the incarnate Logos, shows the soul how this can be done. Along the way, the soul will have to reject the body and the corporeal world. When the soul is mature, it must abandon the metaphor for the reality. When the corporeal world is abandoned completely, the soul will once again be a pure spirit. It will once again enjoy a relationship to God modeled after the relationship of the Logos to God.

## CONCLUSION

In his comprehensive study on Origen, Danielou points out that Origen's

position is the same whether the question at issue is the material side of worship, the literal meaning of Scripture or the visible humanity of Christ: he affirms the reality of all three, but at the same time he regards them only as starting points.<sup>1</sup>

Our study of Origen's interpretations of Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9 supports Danielou's opinion, but it also reveals crucial nuances in Origen's attitude toward man's embodied condition. The literal meaning of Scripture, man's own embodied condition and the Incarnation of the Logos are all only "starting points" for Origen, and all are destined to be superceded by a stronger, more spiritual existence and knowledge. But all three are necessary starting points; they are the vehicles by which God returns the fallen soul to its higher spiritual existence.

We began this study with an examination of Origen's exegetical method, in order to establish a context for examining Origen's interpretations of Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9. Our examination of his exegetical method revealed Origen's somewhat paradoxical understanding of the "bodily" meaning of Scripture. On the one hand, Origen exerts tremendous effort to establish the literal meaning of a scriptural text. Origen insists that this level of meaning is beneficial, to some degree, for all Christians.

But on the other hand, all those who wish to advance in the spiritual life must move beyond the "bodily" meaning of the text, and discern the higher, spiritual truths which God wants Scripture to convey. Since the spiritual meaning of Scripture is the meaning which God primarily intends Scripture to communicate, we are obliged to go beyond the "bodily" meaning of the text in favor of the spiritual meaning.

The discernment of the spiritual meaning requires the use of allegorical interpretation. Allegory enables the Christian to move beyond the literal meaning of the text and to perceive the spiritual meaning. But as Origen develops his allegorical method, we see that the "bodily" meaning of the text is the necessary medium for communicating the spiritual meaning. The Christian can discern the spiritual meaning of Scripture only by thoroughly understanding the literal level of meaning.

A thorough understanding of the literal meaning of Scripture enables us to discern the inaccuracies and impossibilities within this level of meaning. These stumbling-blocks indicate the existence of another level of meaning within the text--otherwise, they would be proof that Scripture is unreliable. They are also the keys for discovering the content of this other level of meaning; the highest spiritual truths which Scripture contains. Without these stumbling-blocks, the highest and truest meaning of Scrip-

ture would be inaccessible. The lowest level of meaning in Scripture, and the "weakest" aspects of this level--the inaccuracies in the literal meaning--must be surpassed in favor of higher truth. But these "weak" aspects of Scripture are the means by which God communicates the greatest truths to fallen man.

Our examination of Origen's interpretations of Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9, and the theological anthropology which he constructs from these interpretations, shows that Origen has a very similar understanding of man's current embodied condition. The body, and the entire corporeal realm, is weaker than the spiritual realm, and unable to achieve spiritual existence. Therefore, the body must be abandoned in the course of man's recovery of pure, spiritual existence. But the body is the only means by which man is able to regain a purely spiritual existence.

Man's current existence is essentially flawed. If pure spirits had not fallen away from God, no "human souls" as we know them would have existed. But pure spirits did fall through the disobedient exercise of free will, and some fell in such a way that they became human souls. God joined these souls to bodies in order that they might regain their original spiritual status. The flaw in man's current condition is that he is a soul rather than a pure spirit. The body is God's means of enabling the soul to become a spirit once again.

The lowest level of meaning in Scripture, specifically the "weakest" aspect of this level, is the means by which God communicates the highest truths. In the same way, God provides souls, which are spiritual creatures, with a weaker aspect--the body--in order to lead these souls back to a pure spiritual existence. Even though the body is less spiritual than the soul, the body is able to assist the soul in its return to a higher spiritual existence.

But by becoming a pure spirit once again, the soul will be forced to leave the body behind. As the Christian advances in the spiritual life, both the "bodily" meaning of Scripture and the human body itself will become unnecessary. If the Christian is reluctant to abandon the aspects of his existence which are too weak for his destined, purely spiritual existence, then even though these weaker aspects were provided for his salvation, they may become hindrances. In order for God's provision for the salvation of man to be effective, man must understand that eventually the body must be abandoned.

Finally, we turn to the soteriological aspect of Origen's incarnational theology. Throughout his interpretations of Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9, Origen emphasizes that the ultimate solution to man's current, fallen condition is the re-establishment of the soul's original similarity to the Logos. This original similarity existed between the Logos and pure spirits. Pure spirits were related to God

the Father in a way which was similar to the relationship of the Logos and God the Father. The salvation of man depends on the recovery of this relationship with God the Father, which is the essence of man's original similarity to the Logos.

But man's soul cannot simply return to this relationship; the soul cannot simply retrace its steps and become like the Logos again. Through its original fall, the soul has forgotten most of its true nature. Its union with the body can make the soul even more oblivious to its true spiritual existence. Since the embodied soul cannot make itself like the Logos, the Logos makes himself like the embodied soul. The Word becomes flesh and dwells among embodied souls.

When the Logos becomes incarnate, he institutes a new similarity between himself and the soul. This similarity consists of the fact that both the soul and the Logos share a corporeal aspect of existence. This new similarity is inferior to the original similarity of pure spirits to the unincarnate Logos since the flesh is inferior to the spirit.

But when the Logos assumes a corporeal existence, he transforms that existence into spirituality. Thus, the Logos reveals to the embodied soul the spirituality of the soul's true existence. By contemplating the divine nature of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Logos, the soul becomes in-

creasingly aware of its true nature, and is able to live according to that nature. The "weaker" similarity between the incarnate Logos and the embodied soul leads to the recovery of the original similarity between the unincarnate Logos and pure spirits.

The "bodily" meaning of Scripture must be left behind in favor of the spiritual meaning; but the weakest aspect of Scripture communicates this spiritual meaning. The soul which becomes a pure spirit must lose its corporeal aspect; but the body is the means by which a soul may become a pure spirit again. The similarity between the embodied soul and the incarnate Logos will be superceded by the original similarity between the pure spirit and the unincarnate Logos; but this original similarity cannot be recovered unless the Incarnation of the Logos establishes the new, corporeal similarity. As Danielou points out, Origen's attitude toward all these aspects of man's current existence is the same.

Origen believes the salvation of man consists of the recovery of a purely spiritual existence: a relationship with God the Father modeled after the relationship of the Logos to the Father. Man's corporeal existence cannot share in this higher existence; it is too weak and must be left behind. But Origen's theological anthropology declares that God uses the weak things of this world to redeem and re-establish the strong.

# NOTES FOR CHAPTER I

1. Joseph Wilson Trigg, Origen: The Bible and Philosophy in the Third-Century Church. (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1983), p. 12. See this reference for possible exceptions.
2. N.R.M. DeLange, Origen and the Jews: Studies in Jewish-Christian Relations in Third-Century Palestine. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 50-1; and Charles Bigg, The Christian Platonists of Alexandria. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), p. 163.
3. Jean Danielou, Origen, trans. Walter Mitchell. (London: Sheed & Ward, 1955), p. 133.
4. Princ. I,3,1.
5. Bigg, The Christian Platonists, pp. 173-4; and F.L. Cross, The Early Church Fathers. (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., Ltd., 1960), p. 128.
6. Danielou, Origen, p. 170.
7. Princ. IV,2,7.
8. Danielou, Origen, pp. 163-4.
9. Danielou, Origen, p. 179; Bigg, The Christian Platonists, p. 172; DeLange, Origen and the Jews, p. 106; and Eugene DeFaye, Origen and His Work, trans. Fred Rothwell. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1929), p. 46.
10. Danielou seems to be of this opinion. Of course, Danielou is also careful to point out that Origen maintained the goodness of the Old Testament against the Marcionites. Danielou, Origen, pp. 143-6.
11. Hom. in Num. IX,4. See also DeLange, Origen and the Jews, pp. 84,106.
12. Princ. IV,3,11. See also Trigg, Origen, pp. 102-3; Danielou, Origen, p. 156-8.
13. Trigg, Origen, p. 103; and Bigg, The Christian Platonists, p. 184.
14. Princ. II,11,3. See also Trigg, Origen, p. 150.



15. Princ. III,3,15; Jo. 13.5.; and Fr. in Ps. (fragment), 80.1.
16. Trigg, Origen, p. 149; and Bigg, The Christian Platonists, p. 186.
17. Bigg, The Christian Platonists, p. 172.
18. Princ. II,8,1. This interpretation is not, however, exclusive: more than one spiritual meaning may be intended by a scriptural text. cf. DeLange, Origen and the Jews, p. 109.
19. Hom. in Ex. V; Princ. IV,2,4.
20. See also Hom. in Lev. IV,5.
21. Cross, The Church Fathers, pp. 129-30; and J.N.D. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines, revised edition. (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), p. 73.
22. Princ. IV,II,8.
23. But see also Hom. in Lev. V,1. This argument seems to follow Danielou's position that Origen ultimately rejected the Old Testament. But here Origen rejects Scripture's literal level of meaning, rather than to the Old Testament itself.
24. Hom. in Num. IX,7. See also Bigg, The Christian Platonists, pp. 174-5.
25. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines, p. 73.
26. Hom. in Lev. I,1; Hom. in Ex. V; and DeLange, Origen and the Jews, p. 109.
27. Prologue to Cant.; and DeLange, Origen and the Jews, p. 112.
28. Hom. in Num. IX,1.
29. Origen seems to be assuming Platonic anthropology here. cf. R.P.C. Hanson, Allegory and Event. (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1959).
30. Hom. in Lev. I,1.

31. DeLange, Origen and the Jews, p. 112; DeFaye, Origen and his Work, pp. 43-4; and Harry A. Wolfson, The Philosophy of the Church Fathers, v. 1: Faith, Trinity, Incarnation. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 30, 34.

32. Princ. IV,2,6.

33. Trigg, Origen, p. 121.

34. Princ. IV,2,5; and Trigg, Origen, p. 123.

35. Hanson, Allegory and Event, p. 22.

36. Princ. IV,3,6-9.

37. Princ. IV,2,2; Hanson, Allegory and Event, p. 253.

38. Hanson, Allegory and Event, p. 242; and DeFaye, Origen and his Work, pp. 45-7.

39. Bigg, The Christian Platonists, p. 169.

40. Princ. I,1,4 and 5,4; Trigg, Origen, p. 153; and Bigg, The Christian Platonists, p. 170.

41. Trigg, Origen, p. 153. DeFaye does not accept this evaluation. cf. DeFaye, Origen and his Work, pp. 36-7.

42. Princ. IV,3,5. This passage is not included in Rufinius' Latin translation.

43. See discussion above.

44. Princ. I,7,5; III,6,7; IV,4,6.

45. This identification of the "stumbling-blocks" within Scripture is the most subjective aspect of Origen's exegesis. Although "objective" criteria such as impossibility or absurdity are proposed, the sources for Origen's judgments in this regard are often without appeal. Furthermore, the moral "aporias" which he proposes are strongly affected by the mores of his culture (cf., for example, his comments regarding circumcision, Princ. IV,3,3).

46. Princ. IV,2,9.

47. DeLange, Origen and the Jews, p. 111; Hanson, Allegory and Event, pp. 247-8; Trigg, Origen, pp. 88, 148.

48. Bigg, The Christian Platonists, pp. 175-7; DeFaye, Origen and his Work, pp. 49-50; DeLange, Origen and the Jews, p. 110; and Trigg, Origen, p. 95.

49. Princ. II,4,3 and IV,3,5.

## NOTES FOR CHAPTER II

1. Bigg, Christian Platonists, p. 167.
2. Trigg, Origen, p. 180; and Danielou, Origen, p. 186.
3. Hom. in Gen. I,10-11.
4. Ibid. I,11.
5. Ibid. I,12.
6. But see also Maryanne Cline Horowitz, "The Image of God in Man: Is Woman Included?" Harvard Theological Review, 72 (1979), pp. 175-206. Horowitz indicates that this inner man is the Savior, Jesus Christ, and the human race has been patterned after this inner man. If this is Origen's position, then he relies heavily on Philo's exegesis of Genesis 1:26-30, where a distinct "heavenly man" is postulated. But I do not think this is Origen's interpretation of this text.
7. Hom. in Gen. I,13.
8. Origen usually uses the phrase "image of God" to refer to the Logos. Occasionally, he will use this phrase to talk about the similarity between God and man. This latter usage does not contradict the former. Origen believes the Logos is the actual image of God, and therefore very much like God. Man is the image of the Logos, and so man is also like God.  
Even if Origen's usage is not contradictory, it is confusing. However, I am unable to improve on Origen's terminology without causing more confusion. The context of each occurrence of the phrase "image of God" should indicate which meaning Origen gives to this phrase in each case.
9. Hom. in Gen. I,13.
10. Ibid. I,14.
11. Horowitz, "The Image of God," p. 194.
12. Hom. in Gen. I,15.
13. Ibid. I,16.
14. Trigg, Origen, p. 109.

15. Hom. in Gen. I,17.
16. Princ. III,6,1.
17. Cels. IV,30.
18. In Cant. II.1, Origen explicitly states that all men are created in God's image. This privilege is not restricted to a spiritual elite.
19. See, for example, Jo. 2.2.3. and Princ. IV,4,10.
20. Cels. VII,66.
21. P. bibl. univ. Giss. 17.
22. For example, Hom. in Gen. I,13; Princ. IV,4,10; Prologue to Cant. p. 217; Cant. II.1; Jo. II.3; Cels. VI,63.
23. Colossians 1:15.
24. Princ. I,2,6.
25. Hom. in Gen. XIII,4.
26. Cant. II.1.
27. Harry Y. Gamble. "Euhemerism and Christology in Origen: Cels. III,22-43." Vigiliae Christianae, 33(1979), pp. 12-29. See especially pp. 15, 24-29. Gamble bases his argument on passages in Contra Celsum, but his conclusions apply to Origen's Commentary on the Gospel of John as well.
28. Jo. II,2-3.
29. Cels. VI,63.
30. Hom. in Gen. XIII,4.
31. Hom. in Ezech. VII,6.
32. I include in this category all passages where the mind or the faculty of reason is described as that which has been made according to the image of God. E.g., Princ. II,11,3 and IV,4,10; and Cels. VII,66.
33. E.g., Hom. in Gen. XIII,4 and Prologue to Cant. p. 220.
34. Mart. XII.

35. Danielou, Origen, p. 295.
36. Hom. in Gen. II,13.
37. Prologue to Cant.
38. Prologue to Cant. See also Comm. in Mt. XIV,16. In this passage, Origen again asserts that the second creation story refers to the creation of corporeal man. He argues that the phrase "male and female" is used in reference to the first, non-corporeal creation of man; the phrase "man and wife" is used in reference to the second, corporeal creation. From this, Origen concludes that marriage is appropriate only within the context of corporeality. So in this passage, the difference between the love appropriate to the corporeal aspect of man and the love appropriate to the spiritual aspect of man is quite pronounced. But even so, Origen does not explicitly postulate a necessary antagonism between the two.
39. Cels. IV,37.
40. Princ. I,3,6.

### NOTES FOR CHAPTER III

1. Trigg, Origen, p. 124.
2. Eugene DeFaye, Origen and his Work, tr. Fred Rothwell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1929), p. 23.
3. Cross, Christian Fathers, p. 123.
4. Hanson, Tradition, p. 48; and Trigg, Origen, p. 54.
5. Therefore, a more cautious position regarding Clement's influence upon Origen is assumed from the outset of this thesis, and will be modified according to the evidence. Of course, the final conclusion reached here will have only a limited value for the general debate on this issue.
6. Strom. II,22; IV,26; V,14. Cf. Salvatore Lilla, Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism (Oxford, 1971), p. 108.
7. Strom. II,22; Lilla, Clement, p. 108.
8. Cf. George Maloney, Man: The Divine Icon (Pecos, NM: Dove Publications, 1973), pp. 56-7. Maloney suggests that this is because Clement wishes to emphasize the continuity between man's present imperfect condition and his future, perfected condition.
9. Protr. 10; Paed. I,12; III,1; Strom. V,14. Maloney and Chadwick attribute this interpretation to Irenaeus. Cf. Maloney, Man, pp. 56-7 and Origen: Contra Celsum, tr. Henry Chadwick (Cambridge: University Press), p. 205, n. 3.

It is true that Irenaeus makes a distinction between the "image of God" and the "likeness of God" in Haer. V,6,1. But his argument does not imply that this distinction is between the similarity to God which man possesses in this life, and the similarity to God which man will have as a result of a perfect life. Irenaeus argues that any man who does not possess a share of God's spirit only possesses the "image of God" and not "the likeness of God," and such a man is therefore imperfect. But the context in which he argues, and the scriptural passages which he adduces in support of his argument, clearly show that living Christians are the "perfect men" to which he is referring. It seems that Clement and Origen are the ones who take

this perfection to mean the final, spiritual state of man. But while Origen consistently employs this latter interpretation, Clement does so only once. As a rule, Clement follows Irenaeus.

Clement sometimes identifies God himself as the archetype of man, e.g. Paed. I,3; Strom. V,5; fragment from Macarius Chrysocephalus XIII,9. These passages tend to emphasize the dignity of man, and may simply be instances where Clement speaks loosely.

10. Maloney, Man, p. 57.

11. Paed. I,12.

12. Ibid. But see also Paed. III,1 which refers to God as the primary agent, and the Logos as the model.

I have neglected Clement's distinction between the earth-born man and the heavenly man. These are Philonic categories, and will be discussed in the section on Philo. Clement uses them to refer to the conditions of man before and after salvation. Philo's use of these categories is quite different.

13. Protr. 10; Strom. V,14. In this last passage, Clement refers to the Logos as "the impassable man," which seems to be an instance of Philo's influence on Clement. But Clement does not expand upon this description.

14. Protr. 10.

15. Ibid.

16. Paed. I,13.

17. Strom. V,14.

18. Various scholars have pointed out the close connection which Clement makes between these two stories. E.G., Bigg, Christian Platonists, pp. 107-8 and Lilla, Clement, pp. 13-15, 57-8.

19. Hom. in Gen. 13. See chapter 2 of this thesis.

20. Paed. I,12.

21. Origen makes this identification explicitly twice: in Jo. II,2-3 and Hom. in Gen. 17.

22. Protr. 10. See also Philo's use of this terminology in Heres. 231.



23. E.g. Cels. V,51; VI,21 and Comm. in Mt. XV,3. See also Danielou, Origen, pp. 178-9 and deLange, Origen and the Jews, p. 16. It may be that Origen sometimes refers to works which were not actually written by Philo. But the "echoes" of Philo found in Origen's writings in numerous places leave no doubt that Origen has read some of Philo's authentic works.

24. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines, p. 157; Maloney, Man, pp. 68-69 and 75-76; Hal Koch, Pronoia and Paideusis, p. 63.

25. Compare Origen's Hom. in Gen. I,13; Jo. II,3; Cels. VI,63; Prologue to Cant. p. 217 to Philo's L.A. 3.96; Q. Gen. 1.4, 4.62; Op. 1.23; Spec. 1.81, 3.207. See also Lyons, Cosmic Christ, p. 24 and Dillon Middle Platonists, p. 160.

26. The identification of the Logos is made, somewhat ambiguously, in Op. 69. The term "Logos" is not used, but the "great ruler" which is the archetype of the human mind is clearly equatable with Philo's more usual term "Logos." See also Op. 23-25. Another opinion is set forth in Lilla, Clement, pp. 108-109.

27. Princ. I,2,6. See chapter 2 of this thesis.

28. See also Q. Gen. 2.62.

29. Of course, this need not mean that this argument is Philo's own work. Philo draws upon a body of traditional interpretations, and this may be one of the elements which he adopts from this tradition. But the similarity between Origen's argument and Philo's makes it likely that Origen uses Philo as his source in this case.

30. L.A. 1.31-38.

31. L.A. 1.31-32; Op. 134.

32. L.A. 1.34-35, 38.

33. See chapter 2 of this thesis.

34. See especially Op. 134-135; L.A. 1.32,40.

35. Jo. 2.3.

36. L.A. 1.32.

37. Fug. 71; Op. 134; Det. 83-84; Q. Gen.

38. Q. Gen. 1.8.
39. L.A. 1.31; Det. 83-84.
40. Cels. VI,63.
41. Thomas H. Tobin, S.J. The Creation of Man: Philo and the History of Interpretation. (Washington: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1983), pp. 28-9.
42. Op. 1.46-48; L.A. 1.31-32; Q. Gen. 1.4. See also Tobin, Creation of Man, pp. 23-28.
43. Prologue to Cant., pp. 220-221.
44. This is Clement's opinion (see the first section of this chapter). Origen may be implicitly correcting Clement.
45. Trigg, Origen, p. 203. See chapter 2 of this thesis.
46. Tobin, Creation of Man, p. 87.
47. L.A. 1.31-32,40. See also Det. 83-84 and Spec. 4.23-24; Op. 139.
48. See chapter 2 of this thesis.
49. Philo does distinguish between man as he exists currently and the first man, the earthly man of Gen 2:6-7: this man was superior in body and soul, compared to man as he presently exists. But Philo nevertheless sees this superior first man as the origin of the species of man as he currently exists.
50. Cf. especially Q. Gen. 1.8,21; Dec. 134; and Spec. 1.81, 3.207.
51. Tobin, Creation of Man, pp. 34, 141-144.
52. L.A. 1.53, 88-89.
53. See chapter 1 of this thesis.

# NOTES FOR CHAPTER IV

1. Princ. III,6,3; Trigg, Origen, p. 108.
2. Trigg, Origen, p. 107.
3. Princ. III,6,1. But see also Bigg, Christian Platonists, pp. 240-241, and footnote 17.
4. Except, as we shall see later, Christ's "soul"--the spirit which is to become Christ's soul. (Princ. III,6,3) Only the Latin translation of this work survives. This translation refers to Christ's soul as "clinging to God from the beginning of creation"--but the original spiritual creation is clearly meant, so the term "soul" actually refers to the spirit.
5. Trigg, Origen, p. 104.
6. Bigg, Christian Platonists, pp. 240-241.
7. Maloney, Man, p. 72. Sometimes Origen implies that the spirit exists in the soul as a memory or an "instinct"--a "spirit-sense." Hom. in Ezech. XIII,4.
8. Hom. in Gen. I,17.
9. Trigg, Origen, pp. 106-107.
10. Hom. in Gen. I,16.
11. Hom. in Gen. I,13; XIII,4.
12. Maloney, Man, pp. 74-75.
13. But see Bigg, Christian Platonists, p. 247.
14. Ibid., p. 273.
15. This statement is based on Princ. III,6,1. As a Christian, Origen believes in the resurrection of the body. Therefore he qualifies his conviction concerning the incorporeality of spirits with a discussion of "airy bodies." (See Trigg, Origen, pp. 112-114) The issue of whether or not Origen departs from orthodox Christianity in his concept of the resurrection of the body is not directly relevant to this thesis. For our purposes, we can simply state that in this context, "corporeal nature" means a material body with carnal desires and defects, which is thus subject to corruption. Pure spirits cannot have this kind of body.

16. Danielou, Origen, p. 295; Maloney, Man, p. 13.
17. Maloney, Man, p. 75. We saw in chapter 3 of this thesis that Origen assumes the rationality of man's spirit, which is the divine aspect which remains in man's current existence. This assumption makes it natural for Origen to describe the return to man's original spiritual state in terms of contemplation and knowledge.
18. Danielou, Origen, p. 295.
19. Maloney, Man, pp. 75-76.
20. See chapter 3 of this thesis.
21. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines, p. 128; Grillmeier, Christ in the Christian Tradition, p. 142; Danielou, Origen, p. 257.
22. This is opposed to Danielou's position. Danielou, Origen, p. 261.
23. Trigg, Origen, pp. 14-15. The theological reasons for Origen's interpretations described by Trigg are not the same as those which are argued here, because Trigg is not primarily concerned with Origen's exegesis of Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9.
24. Cels. IV,3; VI,63. See chapter 2 of this thesis.
25. This theme also appears in Contra Celsum, in the context of Origen's Euhemerism argument. The "deification" Origen discusses does not only apply to Jesus Christ, but to Christians as well. Cf. Gamble, "Euhemerism."
26. Maloney, Man, pp. 74-75.
27. A discussion of Origen's Trinitarian theology is, of course, relevant to his incarnational theology--especially in regard to the Logos theology which Origen assumes in his discussion of the Incarnation. However, a complete discussion of Origen's understanding of the relationship between God the Father and the Logos is beyond the scope of this thesis. The problems inherent in Origen's understanding of the relationship are well described by Trigg, Origen, pp. 14-15 and Danielou, Origen, pp. 261-295. See Lyons, The Cosmic Christ, pp. 106-136 for a discussion of Origen's concept of the relationship of God the Father and the Logos which fits in well with this thesis.
28. Hom. in Gen. XIII,4. See chapter 3 of this thesis for how Philo has influenced this interpretation.

29. Princ. III,3,7. This passage is somewhat obscure, but it seems to point to this kind of intimate similarity between the Logos and pure spirits. See also Lyons, The Cosmic Christ, pp. 111-115, 127 and Danielou, Origen, pp. 254-255.

30. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines, p. 128; Lyons, The Cosmic Christ, p. 137; and Danielou, Origen, p. 261. Danielou thinks this is where Origen deviates from the orthodox Christian position. As we shall see later, Origen does stress the difference between the Logos and created spirits as well as the similarity between them.

31. Trigg, Origen, p. 104 and Danielou, Origen, p. 257.

32. Joseph F. Mitros, "Patristic Views of Christ's Salvific Work." Thought, 42 (1967), 421; Maloney, Man, pp. 68-69; and Gamble, "Euhemerism," p. 24.

33. Gustaf Aulen, Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement. (New York: Macmillan, 1969), p. 38; Danielou, Origen, p. 251.

34. Grillmeier, Christ in the Christian Tradition, p. 142; Danielou, Origen, p. 258.

35. Danielou, Origen, pp. 259-272.

36. But see Grillmeier, Christ in the Christian Tradition, p. 133; Danielou, Origen, p. 265. Several authors state that the Incarnation is important to Origen's soteriology, but stress other aspects as being much more important.

37. Grillmeier, Christ in the Christian Tradition, pp. 52, 143-145; Danielou, Origen, pp. 262-263; Lyons, The Cosmic Christ, p. 137.

38. Hom. in Gen. I,13. See chapter 2 of this thesis.

39. Cels. III,41.

40. The need for the soul to be united to a body follows this same pattern. After the spirit becomes a soul, it is no longer able to simply reassert its spiritual nature. The soul cannot directly comprehend its true spiritual existence directly. It must be taught about the spiritual realm through something which it can comprehend. The soul can comprehend the body, so God unites the soul with a body in a material world which is similar to the spiritual realm. Thus, the soul can learn about pure, spiritual existence through the body. This is the assumption behind Origen's

exegesis of Gen 1:26-30 and Gen 2:4-9 in his Prologue to the Commentary on the Song of Songs. See Trigg, Origen, p. 203 and chapter 2 of this thesis.

41. Grillmeier, Christ in the Christian Tradition, p. 148.

42. Some authors think that the body is the reason why Origen cannot do without the "middle term," the spirit which unites with the Logos. They assert that Origen, as a Middle Platonist, could not conceive of God as assuming bodily form. (E.g., Gamble, "Euhemerism," pp. 28-29) This position misunderstands Origen's theological anthropology. Man's problem is not that he is an embodied soul; man's problem is that he is a soul at all.

43. Princ. II,6,5-6. See also Wolfson, Philosophy, pp. 392-394; Grillmeier, Christ in the Christian Tradition, p. 146; and Trigg, Origen, p. 107.

44. Cels. III,41.

45. Trigg, Origen, p. 107.

46. E.g., Cels. III,41.

47. This understanding of Origen opposes Danielou's position. (Origen, pp. 261,296) The problem with Origen's Logos theology is not that he makes the Logos too much like pure spirits. Origen's insistence on the difference between them actually weakens his incarnational theology.

NOTES FOR CONCLUSION

1. Danielou, Origen, p.132.

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July 18, 1982  
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